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# Rangelands

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## COVER PHOTO

The front cover is a prairie dog and the back cover is a black-footed ferret. Pictures were furnished from the Badlands National Park, Interior, South Dakota.

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# Leadership and Integrity in Natural Resource Management: Ethics in Practice

Zane J Cornett and Jack Ward Thomas

The task we have taken on is to place ethics and leadership in context with the roles natural resource managers play in sustaining ecosystems and people. The challenge is to be thinkers with the courage to express our thoughts in action, and activists who think about why we act (Cleveland 1994:xii). Why? As Rushworth Kidder (1994:5) pointed out: "Each of us, after all, is a teacher of moral values. The examples we set, the choices we make, the lives we live broadcast potent, clear ethical signals to all within our radius. We cannot avoid responsibility for our moral atmosphere. We create it hour by hour in our actions and motives, seeding the next generation of moral actions with the ones we cultivate as models today."

Vocation, from the Latin verb *vocare*, is work to which one is called by the gods (Thomas 1992a:13). With a vocation comes self-imposed obligations to grow, to improve, to strive, to serve, to be our best—the driving mechanism of vocation is will, not a job. Between us, the authors have some 70 years of living with and striving to fulfill this calling. In our experience, the most *effective* natural resource management professionals have is a vocation, and many have influence beyond that afforded by their positions. This effectiveness comes from constant learning, being open to and seizing opportunities, and pursuing a vision (Thomas 1993:33). We correlate effectiveness with leadership. At the same time, we concur with James MacGregor Burns (1978) that leadership and ethics are inseparable—unethical leadership is an oxymoron.

Gregory Gull (1995:20) recently described ethics as having "to do with that which is common to all of us. Thus, to speak of ethical behavior is to speak of behavior that is consistent with life-affirming values—values that are in harmony with the nature of all that is alive." As a field of study, ethics is rooted in philosophy—a "love of learning." Thus, the study of ethics is a loving pursuit of what is "right," and by default, what is "wrong." So how do we know what is right and what is wrong? Thoughts and feelings are neither right nor wrong, they just are. Actions driven by those thoughts and feelings are what will be judged in the context of social acceptability, resulting in labels of "ethical" or "unethical" behavior. Leadership, too, has no real meaning without action; it is effective behavior manifest in desired results. Writing about the process of developing canons, the Society of American Foresters' (SAF) Ethics Committee observed that "The language is rather simple, the topic is not. . . . the struggle [is] between simplicity and complex language that might address all potential situations. . . . the realization [came] that it would be impossible to explicitly cover all contingencies in forestry with a single statement" (Cornett et al 1994:6). A written code provides normative

guidance for individual behavior, not answers for every situation. The answers that address any and all contingencies reside within the individual, imbedded in values and integrity.

Integrity comes from the Latin word *integritas*, meaning entire, untouched, or whole. In relation to professional conduct, we define integrity as "uncompromised values"—*i.e.*, professionalism is behavior aligned with uncompromised values. To be consistently professionally effective requires balancing passion, vision, and action, with integrity aligning these elements each step along the way. Chris Maser (1991:22) described this alignment as authenticity, as "the result of harmony between what one thinks, says, and does and what one really feels—the motive in the deepest recesses of one's heart." Robert Terry (1993:107) echoed this view: "Leadership is a subset of action. Leadership is authentic action, a unique and honorific mode of engagement in life."

## Passion

For years, most in the natural resource management professions have spoken little of our passions—either for the land we tend, or other aspects of life. We adopted the persona of conservative and staid scientists, striving always to keep value systems from despoiling the "purity" of "scientific" research and management. The expression of passion was deemed inappropriate by most natural resource professionals. This model of behavior led Bob Perschel (1990:56) to observe that "our profession is lost, leaderless, and dispassionate at a time when environmental consciousness is rapidly gaining expression, leadership, and passion on individual, social, and political levels. [Our claim as stewards] is about to be lost, usurped by others with far less knowledge of how [ecosystems function], but with an exceedingly greater amount of passion for the land."

In actuality, rather than freeing ourselves of passion, most choose not to express it. "For those presuming to wear the robes of objectivity, the guise, to use Abraham Maslow's words, is often 'a defense against being flooded by the emotions of humility, reverence, mystery, wonder, and awe'" (Orr 1994:136,137). Because dispassion was the *modus operandi*, natural resources professionals were surprised and taken aback when others expressed their passions. Yet, as Herb Schroeder (1996:19) points out, "Value and emotion are inseparable. Any time we are dealing with people's values, we are faced with emotion; and whenever we are confronted with strong emotions, we can be sure that something of value is at stake. There is simply no way to avoid emotions when making important resource management decisions."

This avoidance of expressing values—other than to indicate unmitigated reliance on what we believed to be dispassionate science—contributed to consistent miscommunication between natural resource professionals and the lay public. Most of the "public" speaks in the "language" of values, expressing feelings about the landscape and how it is manipulated. The "language" we use to reply is one of science. No wonder that we understand one another poorly—these are different languages! By giving voice to our passions, we use a more widely recognized language, and are more fully in integrity with who we are as both scientists and humans. The benefits of expressing passion, particularly about the land, are not derived in exchange for the biophysical and economic sciences we bring to the natural resource professions—rather, the benefits lie in embracing passion as commensurate with science (Cornett 1995:9)

Some of the stickier ethical choices professionals face revolve around acts of omission rather than commission (Thomas 1993:39). What is appropriate not to do, and not to say, is frequently difficult to decide. This need not be the case with our passion—our feelings about the work we do, the lives we lead, and the land we steward. Personal and professional integrity are more fully aligned when passions are expressed alongside science.

### Vision

John Gordon (1994:17,19), in the Pinchot Lecture celebrating the 30th anniversary of the dedication of Grey Towers, pointed out that "vision is a word variously construed" and "vision is the operational definition of values." Unquestionably, vision is a word used for different purposes by different people. The dictionary defines vision as "something seen otherwise than by ordinary sight." We frequently attribute vision to those we recognize as leaders. In distinguishing between leadership and positional authority, the role of vision is reflected in how energy is used within a group. Positional authority—typically hierarchical power—exercised without vision, diffuses and dissipates energy. With vision, energy is focused and directed towards a desirable future (Terry 1993:37).

*Natural resource management professions in America are "relatively young yet rich in experience and noble of vision"*

Vision is an articulated condition, state, or way of being different from the present. Thus, "vision is fulfilled through change" (Cornett 1995:8). This definition of vision is equally applicable to standing fast in the face of trends. This can quickly turn into a teleological exercise where trend—a form of "changing"—becomes the status quo. Thus, vision is fulfilled through a change in state (the status quo of changing), through resistance of the trend. In either case, the ultimate measure of leadership is whether the vision is embraced by enough people to make it a lasting reality (Cornett 1995:8).

Natural resource management professions in America are "relatively young yet rich in experience and noble of

vision" (Maser 1991:22). We believe conservation is the "noble vision," a vision shared by the many professions involved in natural resource management today. "The problem is that our professional vision, once on the cutting edge of both social responsibility and science" (Maser 1991:22), struggles to remain current. Even though the vision is still conservation, the accepted definition *and how it is achieved* has changed. Aldo Leopold and many others have written about the evolution of culture through the changing of social values about the land. We believe we are in a state of evolution today not seen since the days of Gifford Pinchot and Teddy Roosevelt.

*To be leaders, we must be loving critics . . .*

Natural resource management professions are institutions, and as John Gardner (1968) observed, institutions are more typically designed to obstruct than to facilitate change. In describing the Achilles heels of both unloving critics and uncritical lovers, he noted that love without criticism brings stagnation through a smothering process that embraces rigidities (i.e. traditions) more than promise; and that criticism without love brings destruction through ignorance of the art of nurturing and strengthening human institutions. Maser (1991:23) puts it this way:

*"Moving forward may be difficult for those whose belief system and personal identity are totally invested in the old paradigm; they perceive no reason to change. The personal and professional trap is that any paradigm, or model of reality, that has become comfortable also has become self-limiting. . . . [a] profession can move forward only to the extent that individuals within the profession develop new philosophies... ."*

To be leaders, we must be loving critics (Cornett 1995:11), working to craft and evolve new principles and applications of conservation that reflect current science and social values. Reflecting on the role of integrity in this process, we believe it is personal integrity that most significantly comes into play in the realm of vision. Like the classic ethical test of what one would choose to do if it was known that no one else would ever find out, the alignment of personal value with articulated vision is an internal measure (Thomas 1993:40). Nonetheless, when we give voice to passion congruent with values implied in a stated vision, we both communicate an important aspect of integrity and step forward as leaders. "Vision is the heart of leadership because vision transcends political interests, testing the outer limits of the vested views that lock people into parochial perspectives, limit creativity, and prevent the emergence of new cultural and political realities" (Terry 1993:38).

### Action

The first words in SAF's Code of Ethics are "Stewardship of the land is the cornerstone of the forestry profession."

Every structure is dependent on its cornerstone as the key to its integrity. Thus, SAF members have affirmed to themselves, and to those they serve, that being stewards of the land is integral and key to their profession. Coufal and Cornett (1993:13) pointed out that this stewardship is a moral responsibility; and while it engages our minds, "it engages us most fully when it also involves our hearts and hands. Stewardship is a moral responsibility to care for and nurture the land through *practices* that maintain or enhance its integrity, value, and beauty for future generations." They continued: "If forestry is not to be accused of paying lip-service to a fashionable buzzword (stewardship), we must continue the process of defining forest stewardship through actions that demonstrate a commitment to our highest aspirations" [emphasis added throughout]. Those are compelling words, and invoke the essence of integrity within any natural resource management profession.

*The number one characteristic people want from their leaders is integrity. We trust leaders who walk their talk on a personal level.*

The word ethics comes from the Greek ethos, meaning custom, usage, or character. Custom and usage are related to action, and it is actions that are judged as ethical or unethical. Character is more nebulous. A person's character is judged, at least partially, on the basis of their integrity. . . and a person's integrity is manifest in their actions. "The number one characteristic people want from their leaders is integrity. We trust leaders who walk their talk on a personal level" (Pennington 1995:10). The weight of ethics lies in actions; it is through actions that integrity and professionalism become visible.

*"There is no solution. Seek it lovingly." (George Thompson 1988:10)*

### **Ethical Choices: Retaining our Integrity**

"There is no solution. Seek it lovingly." (George Thompson 1988:10)

There are no black-and-white ethical decisions; ethics is a realm of greyness, of complexity, and of questions that are difficult to answer. Ethics involve social decisions about what is "right" and what is "wrong." Ultimately, however, these decisions become personal, even though they are influenced by professional colleagues and the broader culture. As Herman Chapman observed in 1923, "It is obvious that a code of ethics represents a consensus of professional opinion rather than individual preference" (Chapman 1992:14).

We are social beings. "A community, almost by definition, requires a shared ethic. Without a common set of values, communities are no more than unstable collections of indi-

viduals coexisting uneasily within common boundaries" (Kidder 1994:7). We make agreements about right and wrong, and subordinate self-interests to those laws, ethics, or other accepted standards of conduct as an obligation to the cultures within which we live. To do otherwise is to suffer the consequences society deems appropriate. When the ethical dimensions of actions are ignored or minimized, the process of *demoralization* has ensued. (Garfield 1995:5).

As natural resource professionals, complex questions about what is right and acceptable are complicated by political processes that affect management decisions. "The democratic process thrives on compromise and, as a result, the guidance provided in law and regulations is frequently confusing, unclear, and intentionally vague or ambiguous. These goals and directives are not guaranteed to be well stated, appropriate, well funded, or even achievable. Yet natural resource management professionals must attempt to achieve the goals, change the direction, or—if the conflict with conscience is too great—to refuse to participate or even resign" (Thomas 1993:38).

How quickly we return to questions of integrity! And lest the option of standing by one's ethics in the face of losing a job is too quickly dismissed as unrealistic, one of the authors of this paper was removed from a position in precisely that scenario. Bill Rockwell (1991:3) clearly addressed the difficulty of these situations:

*"Finally, we have missed the fact that leadership involves moral choice. It is not just the ethical balancing of established precepts, but the courage and humility to divine, weigh, and balance 'first principles' in the face of tremendous uncertainty. It is this responsibility that reveals leadership as not a right or a privilege but an awesome duty... ."*

To paraphrase Victor Frankl, what is to give light must sometimes endure burning. In the extreme, there are those who "have faced death rather than betray the values which. . . make life worth living and worth loving. The decisive question is not who has survived, but who has kept [their] integrity" (Hook 1963:xxiv, xxv).

Earlier we held that evaluating the ethical consequences of omission is a difficult task. Examples might be: less than full disclosure of the consequences of proposed management actions; acquiescence to deceptive euphemisms; and silence on issues when a clearly expressed statement might have influenced the outcome (Thomas 1993:39). A.J. Fritsch (1994:307) reiterates ancient wisdom found in the Talmud and other writings by reminding us that "by our neglect and silence we become accomplices in the social crime. . . it weakens the community." Many of these situations bring to light what Alfred Kahn (1966:24) described as "the tyranny of small decisions." He describes the phenomenon where "big changes occur as an accretion of moderate-sized steps, each of them the consequence of 'small' decisions—small in their individual size, time perspective, and in relation to their total, combined, ultimate effect" (Kahn 1966:44-45). Thus, the accumulation of seemingly small decisions, each of which chips away at integrity, can lead to a circumstance that is clearly in conflict with personal, professional, or social values—a circumstance one

would clearly avoid if the cumulative effect was known beforehand. The utilitarian process of assessing these situations is to ask: "What would happen if *everyone* made this choice?"

Ego is frequently the driving force in such ethical decisions, followed by selfish ambition, which serves to disconnect us from the rest of the world (Halamandaris 1995:12). Stephen Covey (1995:3) believed that those who have lost integrity live and work worrying more about how others see them than about who they really are. Aristotle, in writing about ethics, identified the essence of excellence as "virtue"—as a balance between conflicting states. Moral virtue, to be excellent, must exist between an excess and a defect. Two of his examples were: *courage*, lying between the defect of *cowardice* and the excess of *rashness*; and *proper pride* lying between the defect of *undue humility* and the excess of *empty vanity* (Kidder 1995:70).

Covey (1995:3) saw "integrity as the child of two primary character traits: the mother of humility and the father of courage." Certainly, it was no accident that Rockwell chose to put the words "courage and humility" together. It takes courage to sidestep the traps that ego lays, to avoid the seduction of win-lose games, and to choose instead to act with integrity—even when that means overcoming "sacred" and comfortable traditions replete with inherent myths and habits. When one considers that natural resource management professions exist to serve—that service is the end, not the means—the intertwining of the humility of a servant and the courage of leadership becomes inextricable.

The bottom line is to do the best we can with the human and material resources available. And to remember to tell the truth—all the truth, all the time—about sources of information, and about assumptions involved in decision-making (including levels of confidence). And, about our passions and the role they have played in our decisions—an open acknowledgement that all decisions, and certainly natural resource management decisions, are ultimately moral choices. Credibility requires no less, and credibility is prerequisite to effectiveness. A key message that emerges from successful natural resource management partnerships is that it is critical to take the time to develop trust. Based on integrity and open, honest, and complete communication, the development of trust lays the groundwork for effective collaboration (Cornett 1994b).

"Only when we do less than our best, are less than truthful, or are less effective than we can be, are we losers in the professional sense" (Thomas 1986:33). How are we winners? Covey (1995:4) reflects that while integrity is the child of humility and courage, it has offspring of its own—a "third generation" that includes wisdom.

*"Integrity means that your life is integrated around principles and that your security comes from within,*

*There are three basic approaches to resolving right-versus-right dilemmas.*

*not from without. It also means maintaining the highest levels of honesty and credibility in all relationships. If your security comes from within, you simply have better judgement. You're not in an overreactive state; you don't dichotomize; you don't catastrophize; you're not extreme; you have better overall life balance. With wisdom, you see things in . . . perspective and proportion. . . ."*

### **The Dilemma of Right Versus Right**

Courage and integrity are touchstones in another realm of ethical choices—the dilemma of "right" versus "right"—where each side speaks directly to a shared basic, core value. Four of these dilemmas are so common to the human experience that ethicists treat them as models: Truth vs Loyalty; Individual vs Community; Short-term vs Long-term; and Justice vs Mercy (Kidder 1995:18). Many examples within natural resource management decision-making come to mind in reflecting on these dilemmas; here are some:

- It is right to protect the spotted owl and other species that may depend on old-growth forests—and it is right to provide wood products for people, and jobs for loggers and other woods workers.
- It is right to protect the rights of private property owners—and it is right to ensure that the quality of life of the broader society is not compromised, now and into the future.
- It is right to provide goods and services in an efficient manner—and it is right to be conservative in management decisions to ensure intergenerational equity.

There are three basic approaches to resolving right-versus-right dilemmas. The first was frequently espoused by Gifford Pinchot: do whatever produces the greatest good for the greatest number of people in the long run. This ends-based approach is typically labelled "utilitarianism." In contrast, a "rule-based" approach depends on principles held as if they were universal law. Outcomes are not a consideration; the ideal is allegiance to standards. The third is also familiar—a "care-based" approach known as the Golden Rule. Doing unto others as we would have them do unto us is often associated with Judeo-Christian teachings; yet "it is in fact so universal that it appears at the very center of every one of the world's great religious teachings" (Kidder 1995:25).

How do these approaches apply to natural resource management? There is neither space nor time here to explore the myriad permutations of right-versus-right dilemmas and the scenarios for their possible resolution. Here is one—an example frequently encountered in hierarchical organizations—a dilemma of Truth vs Loyalty. Kermit Johnson (1994:85) discussed the extremism of loyalty in the military as the "loyalty syndrome." He described it this way: "[It] is the practice wherein questions of right and wrong are subordinated to the overriding value of loyalty to the boss. Loyalty, an admirable and necessary quality within limits, can become all-consuming. It also becomes dangerous when a genuine, wholesome loyalty. . . degenerates into covering up. . . hiding things. . . or not differing with [the

boss] when [they are] wrong." This frequently occurs when the "loyalty syndrome," turns into the "image syndrome" in which it is more important to consider

*The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mystery.*

how things are perceived than how they are. Both syndromes may be driven from the bottom up, or engendered from the top down. Command-and-control management, taken to the extreme, results in the use of fear to guarantee an extreme loyalty that contributes to an environment where suppression of truth is guaranteed (Johnson 1994:86).

This works well if the primary interest is always to hear the echo of what is already believed—an interest that reflects the insecurity of individuals who value positional authority over personal power and true leadership. Conversely, the ethical responsibility of natural resource management professionals requires the tempering of loyalty in favor of truth. This can be achieved by consciously creating and maintaining relationships with both colleagues and customers, "where diversity of viewpoint is accepted, where bad news can be safely delivered, and where honesty is consistently rewarded. Decision makers are paid to make the hard decisions. The reliability of the information on which those decisions depend is partly a product of the willingness. . . to seek out and listen to the truth, however disappointing or disconcerting it may be" (Thomas 1993:38). Embracing truth, whether as teller or "tellee," and sometimes at the expense of loyalty, reflects integrity and goes a long way towards building credibility and morale. This is a care-based resolution—the way we would prefer others treat us—though it is also apt to provide the greatest good in the long run.

### **Integrity of the Land**

*"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." (Aldo Leopold 1949:224)*

Note the reference to integrity in Leopold's land ethic. Although these words were written some 50 years ago, they are the essence of what is being called a "new" natural resource management paradigm (Bengston 1994:515). And, in spite of protests to the contrary, there is an ongoing paradigm shift. Not unlike the evolution of plant and animal species, increments of change made in natural resource management over the decades have typically been small and not very noticeable. There comes a time, however, when a few additional increments of change lead to a significant transformation or metamorphosis, whether in biota or paradigms. Such is the evolution from managing for multiple uses to managing for diversity in biota and values, or from concepts of sustained yields to sustainability (Cornett 1994a).

Some dismiss this paradigm shift as a "giving in" to what is "politically correct." A reality check indicates something more substantial is going on. While it is true that there have been great social and legal demands to change the way natural resources are managed, it is emerging science that provides the most compelling imperative (Bengston

1994:518). The results from both research and monitoring simply do not fit into old models (Gordon 1994:17). The most profound of these is the undeniable

complexities of interrelationships among all ecosystem components, including humans (Cornett 1994a).

Both authors of this paper are fond of repeating Frank Egler's (1977) apothegm about ecosystem complexity because it is so true: *"Ecosystems are not only more complex than we think, they are more complex than we can think."* Paraphrasing a recently popular song, we keep finding out about things we didn't know we didn't know. It is this deepening awareness of complexity and perturbation, and their implications for sustainability, that calls us to move into a new paradigm. Partially because of our ignorance and partially because of the uncertainty that is inherent in complex systems, it is imperative for us as natural resource managers to also move from arrogance to humility (Meffe 1995). Einstein had genius beyond words, yet never lost sight of humility: "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mystery." In the end, even after long and illustrious careers and burgeoning technical capabilities, we are still beginners at managing the land—this has always been and always will be true. It is time we face that reality.

*". . .the earth is given to humankind as a trust. Proper use requires gratitude, humility, charity, and skill. . . .We cannot forsake the duties of stewardship without breaking another trust with those who preceded us and with those who follow" (Orr 1994:136).*

It would be possible to rely on the argument that altruism, and doing "what is right," are the reasons to embrace Leopold's concept of a land ethic. To do so would merely be a heuristic device to sidestep the recognition that human sustainability depends upon such a land ethic (Cornett in prep). Due perhaps to our limited capacities to sense the world in a holistic fashion, we must near the peak of Maslow's (1968:25) "self-actualization" to see the imperative of sustaining humans through the protection of ecosystem integrity. Undeniably, it is difficult to see that imperative when the world is viewed only from the standpoint of fulfilling basic human needs. "There seems, over the centuries, to be an abhorance of leaving a cushion, a margin of error, an allowance for ignorance when natural resources exploitation is designed and carried out. Exceeding the limits of biological systems, even rarely, often produces . . . damage that cannot be fully repaired" (Thomas 1992b:8).

Stan Rowe (1992:6) poignantly confronts us on this topic. "Placing primary value on ecosystems and ministering to their needs before our own would also have the healthy effect of counteracting the human species-selfishness that in its many forms is killing the world."

This world view is not isolated. Though usually stated less pointedly, it is articulated in popular sentiment and increasingly from conservation biologists, ecologists, and others. Lincoln Bormann, a doctoral student at Yale, surveyed rural and urban residents living near both an eastern and a western national forest. The survey explored the basic values about forests held by the respondents, and the

benefits received from visiting or living near forests. Many values and benefits were identified; although most were statistically distinguishable from each other—ecological and moral values were not (Bormann 1995). Here is evidence of the coincidence of science and ethics in natural resource management. The significance of this synchronous view is considerable. Oscar Arias (Kidder 1994:267), Nobel Peace Laureate and former President of Costa Rica, said it this way:

*"Our biological world is a world of interdependence, in which no organism is an island: the survival of each creature is bound up with the survival of an ecosystem in a complex and delicate balance. In such a world, isolated assertions of rights or needs have no place. . . . Rather, they must be addressed from a standpoint of inescapable mutual interdependence. This concept of responsibility must be incorporated into our self-images as well as into our ethical and political discussions."*

There is truth in the adages that "talk is cheap" and "actions speak louder than words." Both SAF's land ethic language and the land ethic adopted by the Forest Service (USDA Forest Service 1994:2) constitute calls to action to deal openly, consciously, and conscientiously with the integrity of landscapes. All ethics require tempering of self-interests through acceptance of obligations to the broader community. As Aldo Leopold (1949:204) proposed 50 years ago, a land ethic enlarges the concept of "community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land." Adhering to these obligations to the expanded community—the ecosystems of which humans are but are one component—demonstrates leadership and the highest standards of conduct.

*The real issue, then, is the professionalism of natural resource managers.*

The real issue, then, is the professionalism of natural resource managers. Society acknowledges professions and professionals based on their demonstrated expertise and their adherence to standards of conduct: those captured in law; those in codes of ethics; and those broadly held in society. Applying the definition of integrity—uncompromised values—through the work we do, we make it clear that *having* integrity is *being* professional. Conversely, professionalism cannot exist without integrity. In this day of increasing public involvement, people desire affinity with those who manage natural resources on their behalf (Cornett 1995:9). This affinity will not be created if the professional stance equates ethical integrity with *minimum* legal compliance (Garfield 1995:5). For example, offering intense monitoring as mitigation for a management action that has a high probability of adverse effects may meet narrowly interpreted legal requirements (Thomas 1992b:7). Notwithstanding that this action is a wholly inappropriate use of monitoring, would we then consider the activity ethi-

cal, particularly in the context of a land ethic? Such scenarios underscore the significance of the plea, cited earlier, for a commitment to stewardship that demonstrates the *highest* aspirations of professionalism.

The USDA Forest Service placed in writing, as reminders to ourselves and for all the world to see, words that define our relationship with and our obligations to the land. "Actions that match these words clearly communicate our integrity. The passion of our land ethic coupled with the reason of science is what can make us unique—what distinguishes natural resource leaders from other professionals. It is important that we come to work whole: that we consciously bring with us our science, our emotions, our spiritual connections, our integrity, and all our life experiences" (Cornett 1995:11). When we personally and professionally are open and exact in our observance of ethics, we are leaders who "inspire others to do the same" (Covey 1995:4).

### **Moving Into the 21st Century**

The choice to move forward does not indict the past. In a report to the General Assembly of the 1993 SAF national convention, Sharon Haines, then Chair of their Forest Science and Technology Board, challenged natural resource professionals to be effective and responsible change-agents, to be leaders.

*"If for no other reason than that we are living in a changing society, those of us assuming our watch face new challenges today. In fact we stand on a very short bridge called the present. As the people who stand on this bridge at this particular time in history, we must make the best decisions to move most effectively from the past to the future."*

*"We cannot expect to make the best decisions for the resource or the people who depend upon it by solely relying on the past achievements of our profession. Any more than we can make the best decisions by totally ignoring the past. We must find the will and the way to develop creative solutions to the challenges we face. To blend the best of the past into our vision for the future."*

*"Moving forward, continuously improving, inevitably involves change. With change comes uncertainty. Our ability as individual professionals and as members of SAF to embrace responsible change today will determine how we are judged when our watch concludes. I'm confident that we will not be found wanting."*

Being effective—producing meaningful results—occurs when passion, vision, and action are aligned around our core values.

The following statement appears in much of the literature of The Institute for Global Ethics: ". . . because we will not survive the 21st century with the 20th century's ethics." The Institute's founder, Rushworth Kidder, asserts that "love is at the very heart of the moral universe" (Kidder 1995:10). The connection between ethics and love is ascribed to by individuals as diverse as James Joseph, President of the Washington-based Council on Foundations

(Kidder 1994:37), Astrid Lindgren, an internationally acclaimed Swedish author (Kidder 1994:234), Shojun Bando, a Japanese Buddhist monk (Kidder 1994:51), Bob Macauley, founder of Virginia Fibre Company (Halamandaris 1995:12), Graca Machel, former first lady of Mozambique (Kidder 1994:89), and Chinese author Nien Cheng (Kidder 1994:214). Oscar Arias (Kidder 1994:271) puts this connection into perspective: "Ethics is never dispensable. It is an integral part of human survival. But in the twenty-first century, such survival will be a more complicated and precarious question than ever before, and the ethics required of us must be correspondingly sophisticated." When we love, we always strive to become better than we are today, and when we strive to be better than we are, everything around us becomes better, too. That's the power of love. As a basis for ethics, love—along with dignity, justice, and equality/freedom—are core values that transcend cultures and are manifest in leadership.

Some of you may be uncomfortable with the "L-word" and wondering how it relates to natural resource managers. Once again, Aldo Leopold (1949:viii, 223) said it best:

*"That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics. . . . It is inconceivable to me that an ethical relation to land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for land, and a high regard for its value. By value, I of course mean something far broader than mere economic value; I mean value in the philosophical sense. Perhaps the most serious obstacle impeding the evolution of a land ethic is the fact that our educational and economic system is headed away from, rather than toward, an intense consciousness of land."*

We'll close this exploration of the interrelations of ethics and leadership in natural resource management, with a few words on how they are manifest in professionalism. The sense of professionalism lies solely with the individual; it is not dependent on professional societies or employers. "Professionalism is a reflection, through behavior, of vocation with its inherent commitment, and sharply focused will" (Thomas 1986:28). It requires courage to be ethical (Terry 1993:153). Professionalism is achieved through integrity, by having the courage and humility to make decisions that maintain our values uncompromised. The professionals "on watch" today stand at a crossroads—though it may seem more like a traffic circle being fed by a dozen freeways. These are times when the increasingly recognized complexity within structures and functions of biophysical systems appears simple, when viewed along-side the needs, desires, spiritual connections, and visions that humans have for the world of which they are part and parcel (Comett 1994b). Yet, this is the context in which the evolution of the land ethic will continue. Most of us were carefully trained (and perhaps educated) in academic and organizational institutions geared towards disengaging our hearts and fully engaging our brains. The complexities we face today and in the decades to come, demand that both our hearts and our brains be engaged and smoothly meshing. There we stand, for as professionals and leaders, we can do no other.

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