

Stop and Smell the Roses

Take a look in any city in America and what do you see? Tall buildings, traffic in the streets, and business men hustling to the office all combined in a whirlwind of weekday activity. There's no stopping, no slowing down, no rest during the typical 9-5 workday. The stress and tension fills the city air; it's everywhere! Except for in the street median. Planted in the middle of a thousand agendas is a small tree with flowers gathered around the trunk. This city owned plant has no watch, no phone, no paperwork to fill out and no lunch date for which it is already late. That plant may not seem like much, but it is a quiet place of refuge from the hustle and bustle of day to day activity in the working world. Just like a plant in the median, wilderness serves the same purpose across the globe, quietly providing places where technology has not yet invaded to remove the peace and quiet. Just like a plant in the median, wilderness causes people to stop and smell the roses.

As conservation becomes large issue in America and across the globe, many people are asking the question, why does wilderness even matter? There are many answers to this question. Plants provide the oxygen which we breathe, wilderness is a habitat for the animals that make up the food chain, and wilderness is beautiful. Despite all these wonderful reasons for the importance of wilderness, I think that wilderness is more than a pretty landscape. I think it is an escape from daily life. An escape from that huge biology test, the make-or-break work promotion, or the family member at home that just won't listen. Wilderness is always there and is always open. At any time, the lost soul or the little girl can wander in to sit and just think. There's no admission fee, no advertisements, and no invasion. The wilderness is an option for anyone who needs to gather their thoughts and appreciate something other than their designer purse. If there were no wilderness, where would people go to clear their heads? Where would families go for the weekend and forget about their overly fast paced lives back home? Without wilderness, people wouldn't be able to catch their breath.

Aldo Leopold once claimed that "Man always kills the thing he loves." To a certain extent, this may be true, but I don't think that humans will ever take away the wilderness. No matter how strong or how tough, every person goes through highs and lows. When hard times hit, without wilderness where would we turn? Not the computer or the cell phone, but the woods, the pond, the ocean, the beach. Even the greedy contractor that can almost touch the new condos he envisions in the forest must have the heart to appreciate those woods. If he doesn't, than someone who does understand just has to stop him. I truly hope that man never destroys wilderness. Because if we do destroy it, when man needs to stop and think and smell the roses, where will he find them?