Vacant land? Only to humans

nature
Timothy Nowicki

WHEN I was single, a buddy and I looked at the same girl and commented about her beauty.

He thought she was a goddess. I thought she was nice but not extraordinary.

Weather forecasters look at the same maps but predict different outcomes. Different people obviously see things in different ways.

Along my route to work, there is a "for sale" sign on some land. What struck me was the word "vacant" describing this piece of property.

This land did not look vacant to me. It has willow, cottonwood, aspen and elm trees. Wildflowers such as queen-anne's lace, chickory, sow thistle and knapweed are growing.

IN THE TREES are nesting birds. Mice, voles and moles find shelter under the grasses and wildflowers.

Numerous insects inhabit the upper canopy of tree leaves, the annuals and perennials below, and even underground.

So to my eye the land does not fit Webster's definition of "vacant" because it is occupied and it is put to use. But the implication is that it is not occupied by man or used by man. In fact, many people must ascribe a utilitarian value to an object before it is considered worthy.

Individual plants and animals inhabiting the land are facinating subjects in shape, physiology, and adaptation and deserve to live. Even if those features are not justification for their preservation, let us think how they can help man.

THINK OF the revenue selling Grand Central Park could bring to New York City, yet no one is thinking of selling this prime land. It has value in its natural state.

People compressed by concrete and steel savor the sight of trees and the opportunity to watch a bird, other than a pigeon, fly overhead.

Communities that have planned for green belts and open spaces are most attractive to people. Houses next to wild areas draw a higher price than those stacked next to each other in matchbox communities. Through the years, a city will continue to benefit from those higher values in its tax base.

Man needs variety in life in order to stimulate his large brain and to grow. Stimulation by man-made objects alone eliminates a world of beauty, information, inspiration and much more,

And that's just some of what the natural world does for man.

Skillman aids ARC pilot

The Skillman Foundation has awarded the Association for Retarded Citizens/Oakland County $21,000 for a pilot program in shared learning.

In it, a second family will help care for and nurture a handicapped child to alleviate the burden of the birth family, according to ARC spokeswoman Sharon Connelly.

Shared Parenting will serve six families the first year with a maximum of 180 days of respite care.

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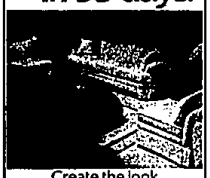

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