

“OUR” OWNERLESS BACK YARD

The popular faith that “Nature” is separate from people, that the designation “wilderness” denotes that nothing humans could do would make anything better for plants and wildlife is an abomination far greater than its impact upon the land. It is an idea that leads directly to the common belief that humans are “a cancer upon the earth,” “consumers” with no productive worth. This belief system renders otherwise intelligent people capable of ignoring the obvious evidence that the resulting policies are not working. Its adherents pretend no accountability for the massive consequences of inaction. It is a perspective that therefore possess no claim to scientific objectivity, wherein total alienation from the land, even succumbing to death, becomes an act of nobility, upon behalf of a deified earth “defiled” by people. On a cultural scale, it is suicidal.

I beg you, having seen the inklings of what can be done, please, refuse this wretched mental trap. The land is a place for work, best we admit that we will never know much about it unless we get to work. All we ever could do is do our best to take account of our history while we work for a future of vitality, balancing the risks of taking action with those we otherwise assume by inaction. This is not just about us as people, it is for that for which we know we are inherently accountable (the flip side of unalienable rights if you will). You and I didn’t cause these problems, but we are accountable to respond, not to tie our own hands in a mutually destructive incapacity for ourselves and the land. It is our nature to be creative; it is in our nature to be responsible.

It is liberating to accept that responsibility, to labor and repair problems caused by others as the sweat dangles from the end of your nose, but be aware: Doing the independent research by which to set new standards of excellence for restoration is addictive, and it could make you an enemy of the State. I fully expect to be attacked and possibly harassed for this, having created at great expense an example: Not of perfection, but of process. Not wild and alien, but familiar and intimate. Not by being a passive actor, but a vigorous and active participant. Not with grants in a public park, but with our own money in our own back yard.

We have toiled here without reward, not just because we thought it would be pretty, but because, knowing what we did, that it was the right thing to do. Our family chose to share with you this story of our land, because we know and wish to share the possibilities within your grasp. My bet is that there is a back yard within your reach. This isn’t about taking over and telling people what to do; it is learning, discovery, and sharing. It is about love and health that begins with our hands in direct contact with that which keeps us alive. There is simply an enormous amount of work to do because...

We’ve got trouble in “our” public back yard.

April 2008



An Oxalis pes-caprae monoculture like this produces thousands of bulblets deep in the soil. There is no known effective mechanical control method for an infestation like this. I eliminated two acres of this on a neighbor’s property.

WILDERGARTEN 6.4

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This book was originally produced under the name *The Responsible Party* for which there were two revisions, [1.0](#) & [2.0](#). Major revisions are for complete rewrites. Decimal revisions are for revised chapters or navigational changes and are not archived. Back revs are viewable by the numbered links below.

Revision History [1.0](#) [2.0](#) [3.0](#) [3.1](#) [3.2](#) [3.3](#) [3.4](#) [3.5](#) [4.0](#) [4.1](#) [5.2](#) [5.8](#) [6.4](#)

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Other writings by Mark Edward Vande Pol:

Natural Process: That Environmental Laws May Serve the Laws of Nature, ©Wildergarten Press, 2001, 454pp, ISBN: 0-9711793-0-1, LOC Control #2001092201.

Shemitta: For the Land is Mine: ©Wildergarten Press, 2009. Contains: 217pp text, 980pp overall, 14 picture books, 2 tables, 963 photographs, 9 maps, 2 drawings, 2 charts, 145 footnotes, 358 citations, and 216 other source references, not including external Internet links. ISBN 978-0-9711793-1-8

[Articles at Wildergarten Press](#): collected writings on Constitutional history and regulatory racketeering by tax-exempt “charitable” foundations

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June 2002



Farther from home, this hillside on the coast is covered with poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*). This plant is so toxic, the pollen is known to cause birth defects in animals. This photo is to show you the potential for this weed to colonize former grasslands. Wilder Ranch State Park is now seriously infested with it. To suggest the prognosis, the infestation progressed something like this...



June 2002



These headlands probably once looked much like this... although when the Indians came in, they burned it bare every year.



June 2002

Then came the Spanish, who grazed intensively with cattle that spread the annual European grasses they were fed on the ship. Then came farmers, who used poison hemlock as fences to keep neighboring cattle out of their vegetable patches, just like they had in the land from which they came. It worked, as long as there were plows on one side and cattle on the other.

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June 2002



The California State Parks and various land trusts took over local farms and the Coast Dairies property with the promise that they would keep it as a working ranch. The weeds took off on the ranch just as soon as they stopped grazing, which was hardly before the ink was dry. The lime colored landscaping for their pretty sign is poison hemlock.



June 2002



There is a lot of this poison, and it has been spreading, although the open spaces are somewhat better this year (2009) because... the Coastal Conservancy put cows on it! So, what was so bad about the dairy?



June 2002



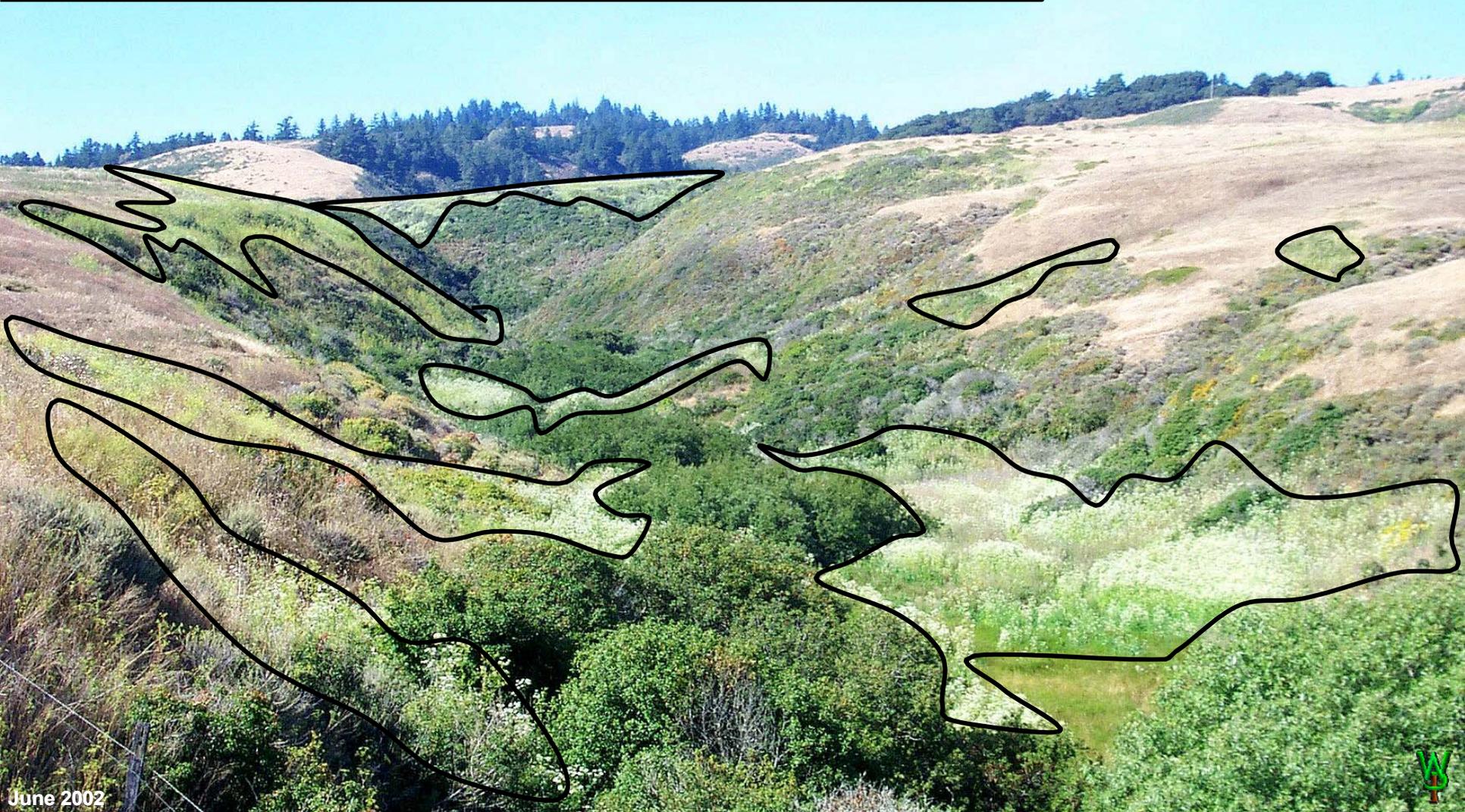
You can see where it was still grazed when I took this picture eleven years ago. I am told the hemlock is now reaching the farthest hilltop. Frankly, it's hard to make myself go back to look. I get terribly angry, having controlled it in our neighborhood. It wasn't hard to do early on, simply picking off the flower heads and putting them in a bag. Then the mowers came and I got to do it again.



June 2002

Well, this abandoned field isn't all hemlock... it has thistles too! (the dark red in the foreground)
Who is going to weed all that poisonous trash when it goes over the cliff? It's all yours, protected for you!

Quail spread the seed. They live in brush, so wherever there is light in the brush, there will be hemlock, for example, growing in poison oak. Who will go get it then? Quail don't die from the poison, but the bobcats that eat them can.



June 2002



Maybe it is being protected *from* you, but by whom and to what end? I can't blame activists for wanting to save these headlands, but when they took control of this land using an ideology that holds human activity as inherently destructive, they were bound to manage it by the same rationale. The result is to abet the spread of a massive and self-replicating source of poison. Should they reverse course now, what was the justification for their having "saved" it in the first place? It was greed to acquire it from people who had loved it for generations with the belief that it would be better being kept "Natural." To what end? Follow the money.



June 2002



“Preserving Nature” without people, while socializing the business of caring for the natural world, replaces local food with factory food. It replaces local resources and jobs with foreign resources and jobs (often destroying foreign habitat). It degrades biodiversity. It ruins soil productivity. It places our lives and our freedom at peril. It blinds science with ideology. It breeds hatred, arrogance, ignorance, bureaucracy, and poverty. It leaves our children deep in debt. It alienates people from the land. It is time for this to stop.

OWNERSHIP DIVERSITY FOR ACCOUNTABLE MANAGEMENT



November 2017 – Uneven-Aged Stand Management, Collins Pine, Chester, CA

So why should restoration research and management be private? There are so many competing land use needs, so much variation by site, so little known or understood, and so much intimate long-term knowledge of a particular site necessary, that the needs are too dynamic, varied, personally risky, expensive, involving way too many unknowns, and processing way too much information demanding **an extreme degree of intimate focus and accountability over decades** to subject land use on an enormous scale to a central planning system that is by comparison burdened by legality, structurally inept, faddish, risk averse, and subject to corruption.



November 2017 – Cheat Grass Invades Rotting-Bug Infested Timber After Fire,
Hat Creek, Lassen National Forest, CA

Agencies such as US Forest Service or the BLM have had over 100 years to prove their worth. When they make structural mistakes, whether fire suppression, lax control of invasive exotics, or harassing into bankruptcy the very landowners who have been the few successfully to retain the last vestiges of a species, the mistakes of political control have been monstrous to irreversible. Unfortunately, many of those “mistakes,” sold as environmental protection, actually operated as corporate subsidies.



May 2009



More importantly, political control inhibits people taking the risk of deviating from common wisdom in seeking how to do things better. Here, I armored this seasonal channel with wood to reverse erosive incision. It worked. Had this been a commercial timber job, I would have been fined heavily for modifying a stream. Political control by government agencies is simply the wrong tool for managing habitat.



August 2017 – Perry Spring, Nevada. This pond and wetland drainage is a focus of wildlife and plant diversity for many miles. The dam was made by a rancher. The land is now an Indian Reservation.



So given all that, is it really so radical to propose that we should at least experiment on how to restore and manage native systems to keep the genetics reproducing should nativity be shown to be important? This is not about the huge landscapes environmentalists beg to protect to death, but about laws to encourage a wide network of **private** plots for research, development, and education purposes by which to perfect and disseminate the processes of stewardship. There really is such a need.



August 2017 – Lookout Mountain, Malheur National Forest, OR

If you were the Forest Service, would you want to admit that this was what you were growing to “protect the environment” as a matter of public health and safety? There are millions of acres as bad as this.



We all make well intentioned mistakes, but when compared to government agencies, the **scale** of private mistakes is very small. A private landowner or insurer then gets to deal with the consequences, which is a lot more than we get out of political agencies.



August 2017 – A private forest belonging to the timber company, Collins Pine, in Chester, CA. Compared to the National Forests you just saw, what do you think?

The scale of problems we face is enormous. Still, given our ignorance of what to do about them, wouldn't it be preferable to allow development of a menu of proven approaches to the wide array of particular types of problems we face? After all, while the ecological circumstances in various places might be similar, the economic and social demands we place upon them (such as clean air) might not. Best to pull from a menu to assemble a mosaic of management strategies at larger scale.

Wildergarten is my “back yard,” so my view is subjective. Still, I have no doubt things here bear a certain similarity to yours because... this is a moral problem.

If we cannot afford to tolerate these results on “public lands,” why are we collectivizing ever more of them?

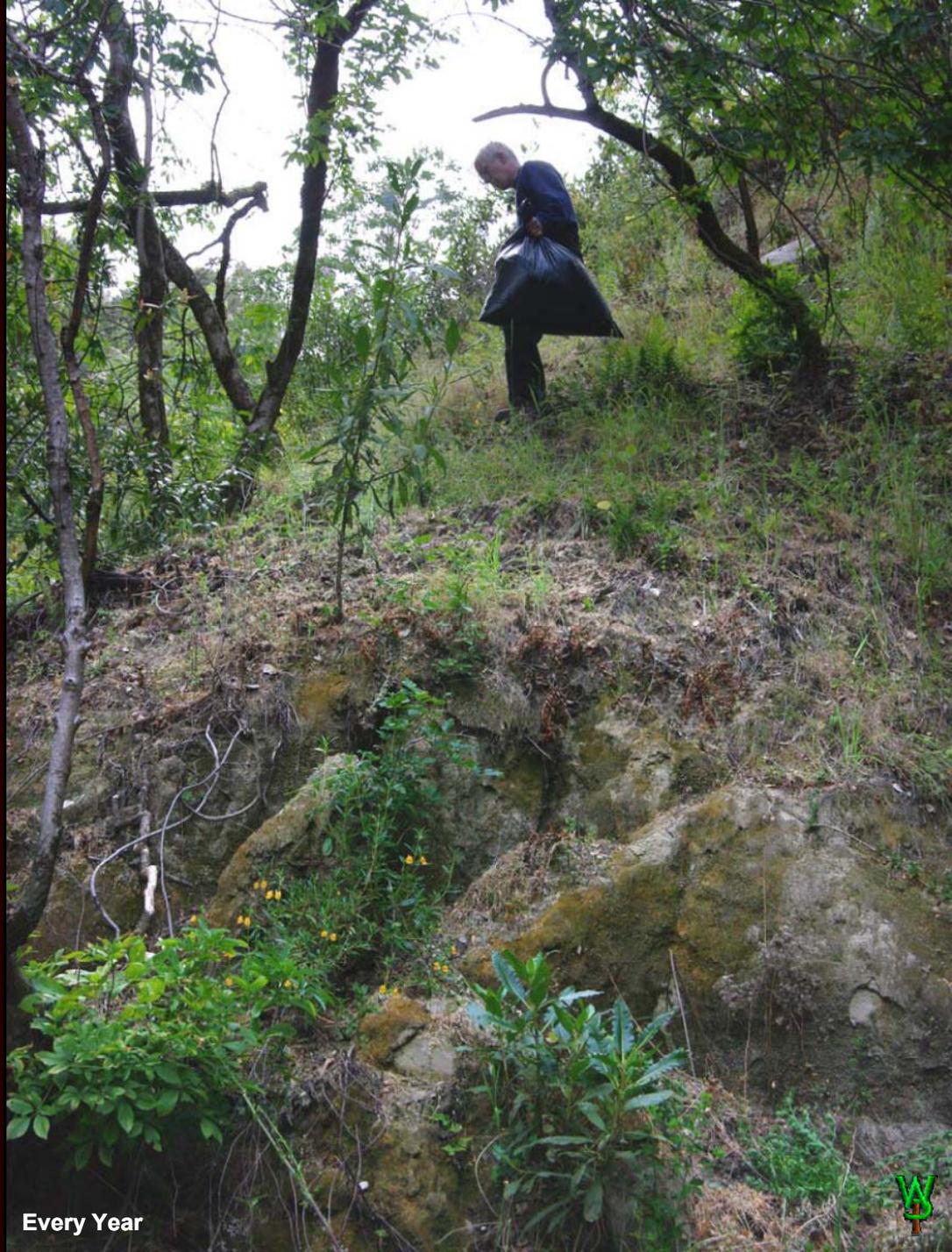
The wealthy socialists who fund the environmental movement want control of land use, markets, and people as a way to make money and secure power. They clearly do not care what happens as a consequence; all the pompous wailing we see in the mass-media they own notwithstanding. The results will be “Natural,” no matter what the outcome.

Unless people, by their actions, demonstrably take the moral high ground out from under the clueless agents of these self-righteous crooks, the damage they are doing may become irreversible, because too many plants and animals will be gone forever and your freedom with them. They are there for us to care for, to make fruitful and to multiply, to fill the earth with life, not to let them kill each other off or let their seed rot in the ground unseen. At least now you know better, and hopefully, after reading this book, you know what that means:

You are The Responsible Party, charged to care for life in the land that provides us life itself, working with your own hands if you are able, to make it ever more productive and beautiful.

Welcome to a worthy struggle, one that will take all our might to accomplish! People must take care of the land to save it and each other from arrogance, ignorance, apathy, greed, and fear. We have a responsibility to learn how to turn the knobs and we’d better get started.

Cain, meet Abel. Seek out your brothers and sisters in your back yard. We need each other now more than we know.



Every Year



HOW TO SUBMIT CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Much of what I have written here is controversial, perhaps to the point of seeming deliberately inflammatory. Yet I would have had no need to document this work if I had not perceived critical deficiencies in the conventional wisdom and the motives of those who fund its development and promotion. Still, I must confront the fact that the work done here will never produce the benefit I intended unless I engage those of contrary opinion. Hence this publication and this page.

Sorry to be so blunt, but I occasionally receive a “criticism” that displays such appalling ignorance of what I do that to reply at all would be seen as disparaging. I remember once submitting an article about the (then) 22 years’ work we’d done and having one of the reviewers ask, “What tool did you use?” as if one would only use one tool in all that time without learning anything and then try something different. Nobody with any intelligence attempts the unprecedented with a “project plan” that remains static for that length of time. I had another genius ask me why I wanted to ‘poison my land’ without any consideration of the “natural” toxins weeds produce by comparison, much less the personal risks I had obviously chosen to take attendant to my own cumulative exposure. I did not crawl on my hands and knees amid herbicide residues for 20 years just so that I could suffer the autonomically strident.

Nobody would do all the work I have done for absolutely no compensation unless he or she cared deeply about the need for that work. I really do appreciate knowledgeable, considered, and contrary opinions that therefore prompt me to think, nor am I shy to admit that I might be in error. Engineers are used to being wrong; it is endemic to developmental research. It should be obvious that I care far more about results than the dominance of my opinions.

So, take your time, construct your argument, support it thoroughly, and your reply will be respected with one of my own. You can send me your comments [here](#) and, if your disagreement is rational, polite, and well supported, I will gladly post both the comment and a reply [here](#). I do read every comment I receive, at least for now but I have no desire to maintain a blog.

However, if in your tenor you are not respectful of my commitment, one which likely exceeds anything you have ever done of the kind, you will either get no reply or you will receive a withering and very public repost. Meanwhile, know that I will keep every comment, and just may, if the situation warrants, create a page upon which to repost them all with which to document the incontinent thinking of their authors. Post with care and sincerity, be polite, and you will be respected for it.

MVP



NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE, YOU'RE NOT. BECAUSE YOU SEE YOU ARE THERE! AND NOT NEITHER HERE NOR THERE

Congratulations! You have reached the end of this picture book. If this was your first time through and you blew off all that marvelous technical detail about what we did in 18 chapters of blood, sweat, risk, expense, tedium, frustration, late nights, caffeine, atrophy, arthritis, recovery, toil, and pain, then you can redress your tragic oversight by returning to Part II, Chapter 1 Fazed Forestry, [here!](#)

If you liked this picture book (or are simply a glutton for punishment) and are therefore interested in more of my writings, you can get much more but way different at:

Natural Process: That Environmental Laws May Serve the Laws of Nature (2001), a deep exposition on corporate and governmental corruption in environmental regulation, and the free-enterprise system to displace it

Articles at Wildergarten Press: collected writings on Constitutional history and regulatory racketeering by tax-exempt “charitable” foundations claiming to protect the environment.

Shemitta: For the Land Is Mine (2009), an amazing discovery of the original purpose of the Biblical Sabbath for the Land, lost for over 3,000 years (includes 14 picture books demonstrating the damage to wildland habitat inflicted by government environmental “preservation”).

More picture books, primarily about dysfunctional National Parks!

If you do wish to help or have constructive critical comments, please contact us at [Wildergarten Press](#). Kudos, warm fuzzies, and criticisms are welcome, really, but please be polite. Oh and please be advised one last time: **If I catch you on our property without permission, then you will be arrested and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.** Sorry, but that had to be said, again; I have caught The Nature Conservancy trespassing here already and have observed others seeking to establish a trespass easement, both were tracking in exotic seed on their contaminated boots. Such clandestine, destructive, and unethical behavior will not be tolerated. Thank you.



OTHER BOOKS BY MARK EDWARD VANDE POL

Quick Read Picture Books

Range Management

Zion National Park

Canyonlands National Park

Deseret Ranch

Fuels Management, Succession Run Amok

The Cone Fire (the benefits of active forestry)

The Warm Fire (what happens without it)

Fire Aftermath: Mesa Verde National Park (weeds)

The Croy and Summit Fires (the wildland urban interface)

Socio-Ecological Paradigms

Environmental Consequences

Meadow Encroachment in Yosemite Valley

Why we can't accept how the original forest as it once was got that way

Living Sheepishly

Why we need a culture of animal husbandry

Sustained Development

Cities are becoming prisons

Katrina: What Did You Expect?

Environmental bureaucracy can be deadly

Natural Process: That Environmental Laws May Serve the Laws of Nature, ©Wildergarten Press, 2001, 454pp, ISBN: 0-9711793-0-1, LOC Control #2001092201. <http://www.naturalprocess.net>

Shemitta: For the Land is Mine: ©Wildergarten Press, 2009. Contains: 217pp text, 980pp overall, 14 picture books, 2 tables, 963 photographs, 9 maps, 2 drawings, 2 charts, 145 footnotes, 358 citations, and 216 other source references, not including external Internet links. ISBN 978-0-9711793-1-8. <http://www.shemitta.com>

Articles at Wildergarten Press: collected writings on Constitutional history and regulatory racketeering by tax-exempt "charitable" foundations. http://www.wildergarten.com/wp_pages/articles.html



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These are LARGE files; they do take time to load

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