

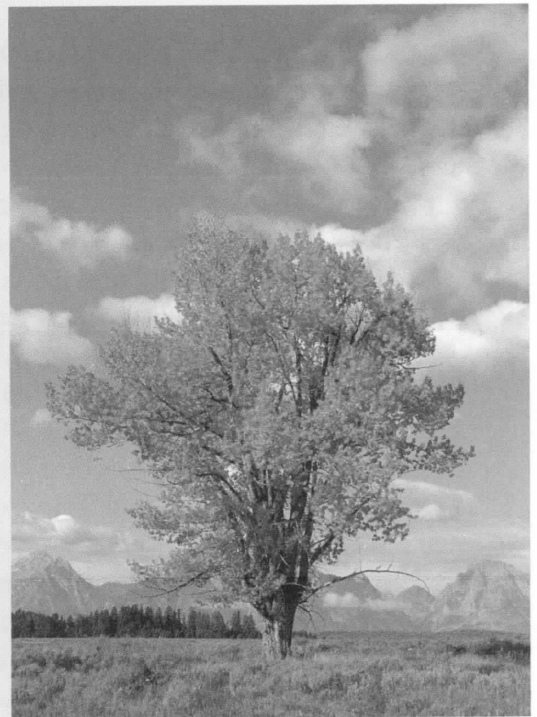


## RESURRECTION UNIVERSITY PARISH

# Land Stewardship Committee

### ICH UND DU

*"I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree."* Those haunting words from the American poet Joyce Kilmer were penned just months before he was killed in WWI. (1913) The poem was later turned into a top 40 song made popular by the Sons of the Pioneers a Western singing group.(1939).



For ages mankind has had a special relationship with trees. Trees were the home of the first progenitors of man that kept them safe from the prehistoric predators. It was a mark of mankind's progress and development when they came down from trees and took up abode in caves, then campfires, and soon primitive homes such as the wickiups, hogans, and tree triangles made popular by the Sheepeater Indians of Yellowstone. Some of these early shelters still stand known to a few people that keep their location secret and safe from the hordes of tourists that would —quite simply—love them to death as they tore them down for souvenirs.

As mankind advanced in wisdom and knowledge, they used tree branches for arrows, and young supple branches for bows to shoot arrows. Tree wood became stocks for rifles, kettles for water, cream, milk, travois, and eventually wagon beds, wheels, and houses.

Then, just before WWII, the philosopher Martin Buber wrote about trees in the beginning of his new philosophy which was nicknamed I-Thou relationship.

*"But it can also happen, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into relation, and the tree ceases to be an it. "*

*Martin Buber, I-Thou*

WESTERN  
COUNTRY

Buber's developing philosophy drew attention to relationships of things to things and more importantly people to things. As he said:

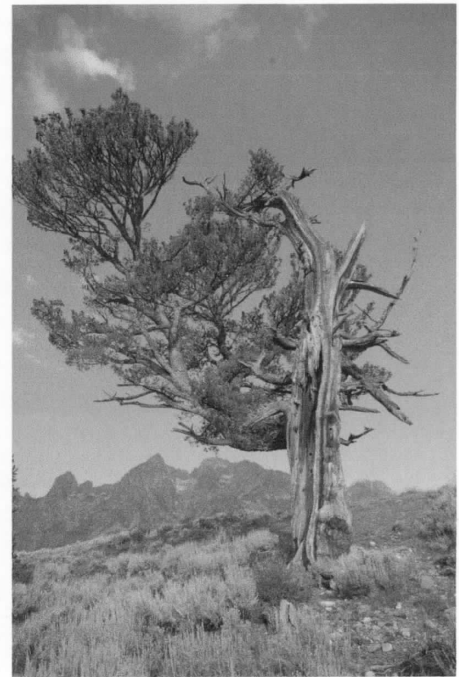
*"I contemplate a tree.... I can feel it as movement: the flowing veins around the sturdy, striving core, the sucking of the roots, the breathing of the leaves, the infinite commerce with earth and air... I can assign to it a species and observe it as an instance, with an eye to its construction and its way of life... I can overcome its uniqueness and form so rigorously that I recognize it as an expression of the law.... I can dissolve it into a number, into a pure relation between numbers, and eternalize it. Throughout all of this the tree remains my object and has its place and its time span, its kind and condition. But it can also happen, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into relation, and the tree ceases to be an it."*

Now, with the growing emphasis on ecology, Creation Care, and Land Stewardship, the world, at least part of it, is seeing that there is more to Nature, the fields, streams, and the trees than one suspected. That is not so strange since once we leave an anthropomorphic view we are all capable of seeing trees as THOU. Think not? Well the highly educated, secular members of the forestry community not only see trees as more than board feet but write about it. "we...instinctively realized that there was something profoundly wrong with modernity's objectification of reality when we read Martin Buber's I and Thou. (Cross Current, *TREES, FORESTRY, AND THE RESPONSIVENESS OF CREATION*, by Brian J. Walsh, Marianne B. Karsh, and Nik Ansell.)

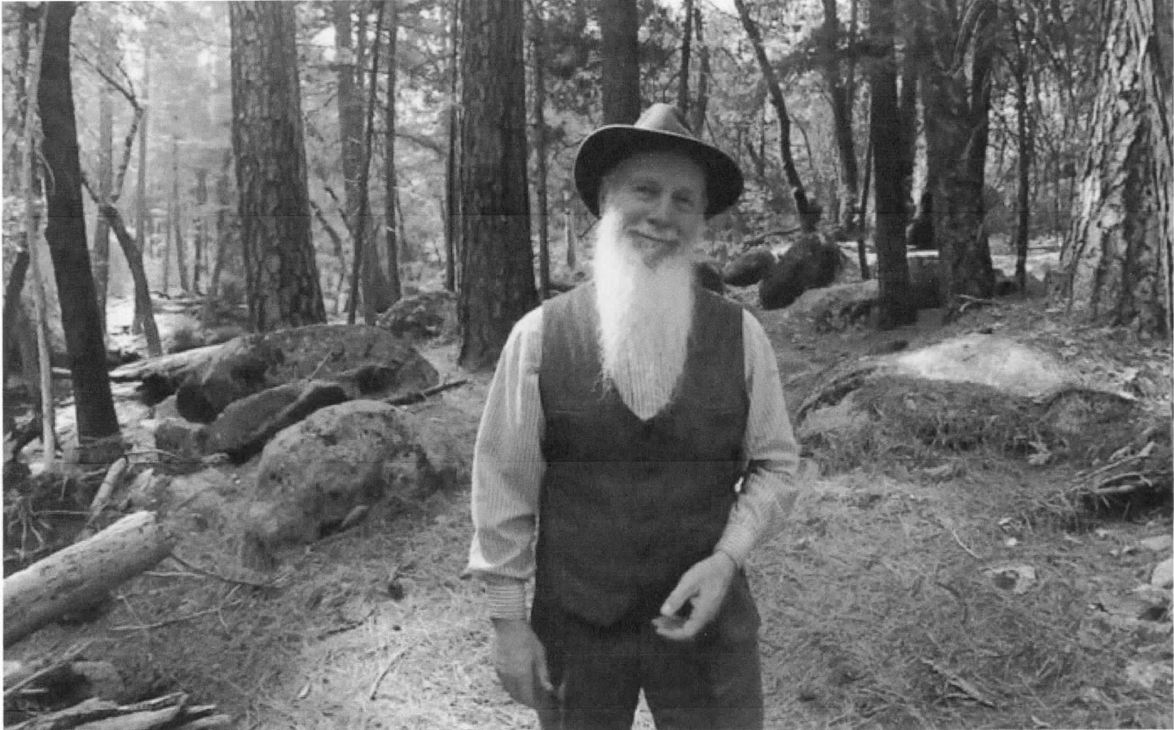
Trees serve well as houses, boats, wind breaks, planks, firewood, fences, kitchen utensils, and a myriad of other uses noble as well as banal. Even in death trees show well. Who hasn't marveled at the Noble Pine construction of Old Faithful Inn or the Patriarch Tree in the Grand Tetons—a tree so iconic that even after moving the highway several hundred yards people still park and walk over to admire it.

In a recent highly publicized event in South Florida an architect hired by the Miami Archdiocese drew plans for a new church and grounds that called for the complete destruction of a 200 year old cypress hammock of scores of cypress trees, bay trees, wild coffee, and hundreds of other native plants so that an appropriate grand entrance of asphalt and cement could more appropriately lead the congregation to God. (Who, of course, lives only in the Tabernacle)

The efforts of the people of God, advisors to the pastor, made it known that trees can have a I-THOU relationship. The architect was dismissed, the Catholic Conference of Bishops issued a grant to develop a base study of using nature to accentuate a parish, the community rallied around the grounds committee, and the Cypress live as part of God's splendor.



Simple as I-Thou. Simple as *ICH UND DU*.



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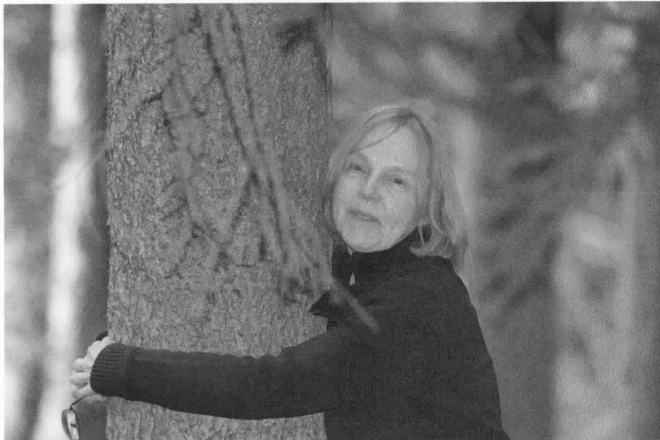
**John Muir** (1838-1914) was a famous Scottish-American naturalist, environmental philosopher, and author. Not only is he an important figure when it comes to activism regarding the preservation of wilderness in the United States, but he is also famous for his writings. In other words, during his lifetime, he had written remarkable books and essays about the time he spent in nature. Some of his most important works are *The Mountains of California* (1894), *My First Summer in the Sierra* (1911), *The American Forests*, *In the Heart of the California Alps*, and so on. His dedication to nature and science is one of the reasons why he is also known as John of the Mountains or Father of National Parks.

Besides being an authority in the field of wilderness preservation, he is also considered to be an influential person when it comes to teaching others about the crucial features of the ecology science. Also, he firmly believed that all living things are interrelated. On one occasion he said: "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

John Muir's wisdom comes down through the ages. It seems as though we have a lot to learn from this impressive scientist. By reading and thinking about what he had said, we may become more aware of the things essential to our own existence.

*"The wrongs done to trees, wrongs of every sort, are done in the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, for when the light comes, the heart of the people is always right."*

John Muir, *John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir*



If you look long  
enough, hard  
enough, you can find  
God in all things—  
even a tree.

The question still stands.

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE TREES AT RESURRECTION UNIVERSITY PARISH?  
JOIN THE LAND STEWARDSHIP AND SHOUT IT  
OUT



**GREEN LEAF AND LAND STEWARDSHIP** are planning for the "*New Look*" of Resurrection University Parish. Land Stewardship ministry is forming up its part in this plan with a list of speakers and programs, including book reviews, zoom sharing sessions and the like for the parishioners and student body all centered on ecology, environmentalism, and the spiritual dimension of the Good Earth. Native American aspects will be a significant part of the written and spoken presentations. And the "old timers" of the parish are not to be forgotten and will be a major focus also.

—**Employment Opportunity**—

The Land Stewardship Committee has a one time 20 hour employment opportunity for a member of Resurrection Parish. The job is budgeted for \$30/Hr. Applicants must be skilled in Word and Excel, be self motivated, and have writing skills. Journalism background is helpful but not required. MSU students are most welcome to apply.

**Paul Gore 406-587-2001**