

FROM THE EDITORS

The universe would be incomplete without man; but it would also be incomplete without the smallest transmicroscopic creature that dwells beyond our conceitful eyes and knowledge.

John Muir

A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf (1916)

Nearly a century ago, John Muir identified a critical dilemma that would face society: ensuring mankind's survival and progress while preserving nature and its progeny. Muir recognized the value of all creatures on earth. Today, society has started to embrace Muir's concerns for many reasons. Some are selfish. With recent advances in genetic engineering techniques and biotechnology, small and exotic creatures have led to amazing scientific discoveries — and enormous profits. Using these new techniques, scientists have discovered miracle medicines in wild plants, genetic defenses against agricultural pests, and other startling and unanticipated applications that promise to improve the human condition. Of course, beyond the potential benefits to society, some believe that all life has intrinsic value, and that allowing indiscriminate, human-caused extinction is simply wrong. Working together, natural resources managers and private citizens must now reconcile preserving the natural environment with modern society's insatiable demand for economic development. The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) — recognized by scholars as the nation's "flagship enactment" on wildlife protection — currently attempts to address these issues by regulating the "take" of threatened and endangered species and the destruction of their designated critical habitat.

This issue of *Environs* explores the ESA's existing protective mechanisms, and critically evaluates new possibilities for the next century. In the first article, **Keith G. Wagner** examines the Environmental Protection Agency's recent attempts to harmonize the ESA's mandate to protect listed species with its duty to approve state-run National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System programs under the Clean Water Act. **David W. Burnett** then explains why current environmental laws must incorporate landscape ecology to effectively regulate habitat modification. Next, **Graham M. Lyons** traces the history of the ESA's habitat conservation program and recommends reforming the program's standards to ensure uniformity and an effective opportunity for public review and enforcement. Finally, **Anne M. Hartridge** shares one Native American tribe's economic and spiritual dependence on the coho and chinook salmon and options that are available for future protection of these threatened species.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of *Environs*. As the next century quickly approaches, we will continue providing our readers critical perspectives on important environmental law and policy issues. Thank you for your support.

Keith G. Wagner
Managing Editor



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