



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

OF MEN AND DRUMS

We are desperately in need today of help in relating ourselves to a world that seems increasingly shoddy--even downright dangerous to human life.

If man is a natural creature, why do we need this help? Possibly because we have lost track of our natural beginnings. Modern man is more a creature of his own civilization than of the natural biotic environment that, quite literally, grew him.

We shaped a civilization and then, in turn, the culture of our own creation began to shape us. Most of our environmental woes today spring from "loss of touch" with the natural balances that still govern us, whether we realize it or not.

Even man, with all his technology, cannot unbalance Nature. If we put too heavy an entry into the pollution column, Nature simply subtracts from the columns labeled "beauty" and "comfort" and eventually even "safety." The adjusted balance results in an unpleasant squeeze for most life forms that we humans consider desirable.

Our lives are inextricably interwoven into the thin blanket of life that covers our tiny planet. Let one thread rot or ravel, and the whole fabric is in danger of falling into disrepair or complete disintegration.

Should such a tragedy occur, Nature would eventually reach new balances. They might be of such a nature that man would no longer be a factor.

The National Park Service has established a network of Environmental Study Areas (ESAs) where the superb natural and cultural values of the National Park System are interpreted through on-going environmental education programs in nearby schools and for interested individuals or groups.

ESAs are for exploring, for discovering, for awareness and for growth. In them, people can examine the natural pulses and rhythms of the Earth and its delicate, quivering balances.

They can examine too the "different drummer" to which their own civilization marches.

Man is cunning, acquisitive, comfort-seeking, and infinitely inventive. If he can be jarred out of his preoccupation with his own uniquely human desires and his terrifying abilities to fulfill them, he may yet create a harmonious counterpoint of human and natural drums.

An Environmental Awareness Message
from the National Park Service