



Counseling and Human Resources Consulting, PC

MICHAEL H. BROWN, ED. S.
LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR
LICENSED MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST
DIPLOMATE IN CLINICAL HYPNOTHERAPY
E-Mail: Internet: MBROWNLPC@aol.com
Website: HTTP://www.MichaelBrown.org

4889 A FINLAY STREET
RICHMOND, VA 23231
(804) 222-0483
FAX: (804) 222-8823

KEEPERS OF THE SACRED GROVE: MOTIVATING AND EMPOWERING RESOURCE MANAGERS TO PROTECT WILDERNESS VALUES

PRESENTED BY

Michael H. Brown, M.A.
Human Resources Consultant
6214 Hibbling Avenue
Springfield, Va, 22150

And

Michael Freed, Ph.D.
Department Head
Recreation and Parks Administration
Arkansas Tech University

At the
4TH WORLD WILDERNESS CONGRESS
ESTES PARK, COLORADO
SEPTEMBER 16, 1987

QUIS CUSTODIET IPSOS CUSTODIUM
WHO WILL GUARD THE GUARDS?

INTRODUCTION

In his twelve volume work, The Golden Bough, Sir James George Frazer explained the strange rule of the priesthood which passed on the title of "King of the Wood" at the lake and grove of Nemi in the Alban hills outside of Rome. This grove has been used since ancient times for worship of Diana the Hunter, and is immortalized thus by Virgil in the legend of the Golden Bough. (Frazer, 1980):

The lake of Nemi is still as of old embowered in woods where in spring the wild flowers bloom as no doubt they did two thousand years ago... Here in the very heart of the wooded hills, the Sylvan goddess Diana had an old and famous sanctuary, the resort of pilgrims from all parts of Latium. It was known as the Sacred Grove of Diana Nemorensis, that is, Diana of the Wood.

The retirement of the spot and beauty of the landscape naturally tempted some of the luxurious Roman nobles to fix their summer residences by the lake. Here Lucius Caesar had a house to which on a day in early summer only two months after the murder of his illustrious namesake, he invited Cicero to meet the assassin Brutus... Here Julius Caesar built himself a costly villa... Here, Caligula had two magnificent barges or rather floating palaces launched for him on the lake.

So to the last, in spite of a few villas peeping out here and there from among the trees, Nemi seems to have remained in some sense an image of what Italy had been in the far-off days when the land was still sparsely peopled.

However, it was not merely in its natural surrounding that this ancient shrine of the sylvan goddess continued to be a type of miniature of the past. Down to the decline of Rome a custom was observed there which seems to transport us at once from civilization to savagery.

In the sacred grove there grew a certain tree round which at any time of the day, and probably far into the night, a grim figure might be seen to prowl. In his hand he carried a drawn sword and he kept peering warily about him as if at every instant he expected to be set upon by an enemy. He was a priest and a murderer; and the man for whom he looked was sooner or later to murder him and hold the priesthood in his stead. Such was the rule of the sanctuary.

The post which he held by this precarious tenure carried with it the title of King of the Wood (*Rex Nemorensis*), but surely no crowned head ever lay uneasier or was visited by more evil dreams than his. For year in-year out, in summer and winter, in fair weather and in foul, he had to keep his lonely watch. The least relaxation of his vigilance, the smallest abatement of his strength of limb or skill of fence put him in jeopardy, grey hairs might seal his death warrant.

Sir Fraser used this myth to trace the ancient sources of magic and religion in early cultures. In this paper we use the myth of Nemi as a metaphor for the needs of the "Keepers of the Sacred Grove." For indeed today pilgrims still journey to the sacred groves. The parks and wildernesses of our nation are attended by millions seeking relief from their urban lives. (RFF 1983, PCAO 1987)

The keepers of the grove, today's resource managers and public servants still protect these nature reserves, wildernesses, parks and gardens. Year in-year out, in summer and winter, in fair weather and foul, they keep their lonely watch. And at times they must think that the least relaxation of the vigilance or smallest abatement of their strength and skill might put the resource in jeopardy.

But who will guard the guards? Who is working to protect the resource manager from burnout, devitalization, loss of self-esteem and other perils of organizational life? Who empowers the keepers of the sacred grove to keep the light of enthusiasm and meaning alive in today's society?

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this paper is to report on educational and psychological methods used in career development workshops and motivational training for wilderness managers, particularly those in Federal recreation agencies, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and others.

METHODS

Over a 4 year period, from 1983 to 1987, career development workshops and motivational training programs were offered to institutions and agencies throughout the United States and Canada by both authors. Over 500 participants attended these seminars.

The training sessions were designed to clarify and strengthen the core values of the individual and develop team motivations and behaviors. Whenever possible, the training sessions were held in the wilderness and natural areas. During these 3-5 day sessions, participants were taught to examine their wilderness values and inner emotional framework under the direction of a Human Resource Consultant and a Professor of Leisure Studies through the use of psychological techniques including journaling, reflective writing, introspection, small group interaction, relaxation and stress management techniques, visualization, and group problem solving.

BASIC QUESTIONS

This work posed four basic questions to resource managers in charge of the Wilderness Preservation System and other public lands in the United States.

1. Do resource managers stay in touch with their own wilderness values? What personal vision or sense of purpose drives them in their primary work? How can they retain their motivation in the face

of relentless pressures from external forces to use wild lands for singular purposes?

2. Do resource managers articulate the values of wilderness to others in a clear and direct manner?
3. How can they improve their communication skills so they interact in a positive way with other managers in their unit or agency as well as with external publics? How can they communicate their vision of the meaning of wilderness to others?
4. Last, and perhaps most important, how can today's resource managers facilitate others, particularly wilderness and park users, in developing their own vision about the meaning of wild and natural lands?

RESULTS

A major finding of this work was that there is a large population of resource management personnel with particular mid-career stresses related to their role as "keepers of the sacred grove." Part of the organizational mythology of land management agencies deals with the importance of the work of preservation. The dedication of many of these career employees to their task is renown among the agencies. Yet the stress of modern bureaucratic life is interpreted against a mythic role of "keeper of the sacred grove"; hence, normal stresses are personalized rather than defused or ameliorated through personal and professional growth.

Through subjective reports by participants, the use of innovative methods for enhancing career development was validated and affirmed. Research showed that in a random sample of managers involved in these career development and motivational trainings, more than 60 percent expressed interest in, and receptivity to, further training.

SUMMARY

Future research is recommended which will integrate psychological literature with the needs and experience of resource managers. From our small sample of participants we have been able to document intense interest in techniques for self-motivation. We view the importance of this work as being equivalent to "guarding the guards" of our natural heritage in their long struggle to keep wild areas "forever wild."

REFERENCES

Frazer, James George, Sir, 1980, The Golden Bough, 1980, London: MacMillan. 12 volumes.

President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, 1987, Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

Resources for the Future, Outdoor Recreation for America, 1983, Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future.

WORKSHOPS & SYMPOSIA

MICHAEL H. BROWN, M.A.

July 1982, Presentation at the Third Wilderness Psychology Group Conference, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV, "Wilderness Vision Quest".

July 1983, Wilderness Vision Quest: A three day backpacking trip for Wilderness Program Directors from the USDA-FS, The Wilderness Society, National Wildlife Federation, Smithsonian Institute, American Rivers Conservation Council, West Virginia University, and the American Forestry Association.

October 1983, Third World Wilderness Congress, Forres, Scotland, two workshops, "Wilderness Vision Quest: Exploring the Frontiers of Inner Awareness and Wilderness Appreciation".

November 1984, conceived, coordinated and convened the Twentieth Anniversary Celebration of the signing of the Wilderness Act, at the National Parks and Conservation Association, Washington, D.C. Presentations by: Author Michael Frome; Max Peterson, Chief of the USDA-FS; Tom Ritter, Chief of Visitor Information for the USDI-NPS; Joyce Kelly, Chief of Wilderness Resources for the USDI-BLM; former Senator Gaylord Nelson of The Wilderness Society; Tim Mahoney from The Sierra Club; Congressman John Seiberling; Dr. John Hendee of the USDA-FS; and Michael Brown.

August 1985, Career Development Quest: A three day backpacking trip for personnel of the USDA-FS, Southeast Forest Experiment Station, Asheville, N.C..

October 1985, Career Development Quest: A three day backpacking trip for personnel from the USDI-BLM and USDA-FS.

November 1985, University of Idaho, College of Forestry, Moscow, Id. Facilitated a meeting of the Board of Advisors; led a retreat for the Executive Council; led a two day retreat for faculty in the Department of Wildland Recreation.

November 1985, Three workshops for the annual meeting of the USDA-Senior Executive Service, Washington, D.C.. "Developing the Management Corps: Vision as the Key to Productivity".

October 1986, Career Development Quest: A three day backpacking trip for personnel from the USDA-FS.

November 1986, First Annual Meeting of Wilderness Managers, USDI-BLM, St. George, UT. "Being a Wilderness Manager: Problems, Challenges, Potentials".

December 1986, Meeting of Wilderness Managers, USDA-FS, Portal, AZ. "Being a Wilderness Manager: Problems, Challenges, Potentials".

August 1986, University of Idaho, College of Forestry, Moscow, Id. Conducted a four day retreat called "Wilderness Quest" for high potential, low achieving probationary students; facilitated a one day team building retreat for faculty in the Department of Wildland Recreation.

September 1987, 4th World Wilderness Congress, Estes Park, Co. Presented three papers: "Wilderness Vision Quest: Exploring the Frontiers in Human Resource Development"; "How Wilderness Experience Programs Facilitate Personal Growth", co-authored with Dr. John Hendee, Dean, College of Forestry, University of Idaho; and "Keepers of the Sacred Grove: Motivating and empowering resource managers to protect wilderness values", co-authored with Michael Freed, Head, Recreation and Park Administration, Arkansas Tech University. Facilitated the use of "Kiva Groups" among congress attendees.

MICHAEL FREED, PH.D.

November 1983-November 1986, Executive Secretary of the Federal Recreation Roundtable. Planned and organized quarterly seminars for Federal Agency heads in Recreation, sponsored by George Mason University. Speakers included: William Penn Mott (NPS); Roy Feuchter (USDA-FS); Joyce Kelly (Defenders of Wildlife); George Siehl (Library of Congress); Loren Frazer (President's Commission on Americans Outdoors); Derek Crandall (American Recreation Coalition); and John Poulk (TRA).

June 1985, Environmental Education Interpretation Workshop, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, West Indies. Under contract to the Organization of American States and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

October 1985, "Skills and Methods for Interpretation", National Park Service, Interpretive Skills Level 3, Interpretive Training Workshop, Prince William National Park, Va.

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November 1985, Continuing Interpretation, California Department of Recreation and Parks, Mott Training Center, Monterey, Ca.

May 1986, Advanced Interpretation, California Department of Recreation and Parks, Mott Training Center,

Monterey, Ca.

March 1986, "Managing the Difficult Employee", National Park Service Supervisory Training, Harper's Ferry Training Center, Harper's Ferry, WV.

May 1987, "Environmental Education and Natural Resources Management", Basseterre, St. Kitts, West Indies. Under contract to the Organization of American States and the Government of St. Christopher Nevis.

July 1987, Advanced Environmental Education and Natural Resource Management Workshop, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, West Indies. Under contract to the Organization of American States and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.