

EXPLORING ETHICS FOR MASTER NATURALISTS. Kathy S. Groves, Arboretum and Herbarium Technician, Cofrin Center for Biodiversity, University of Wisconsin – Green Bay Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Environmental education programs are often based upon the idea that sharing knowledge and love for nature will lead others to care for wilderness areas. While this is often true, economic considerations tend to drive decisions regarding land. This has led to continual abuse of both public and private lands. The answer to this dilemma is often – more environmental education. While the volume of environmental education may indeed be part of the solution, the content must also include the development of a land ethic. As defined by Aldo Leopold (1949) the land ethic “..reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land. Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity”. This session will explore ways to identify individual attitudes toward conservation, discuss various conservation philosophies, and explore techniques for helping others develop a land ethic.