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First name: William

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Organization: The Mending House

Title: Founder

Comments: Chief Seattle said, "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children." When I was very young and taken to church for the first time, I still recall an inarticulate sense of reverence so palpable within that sanctuary by the silence it instilled upon my soul. I have only experienced such deep emotions in one other place... the forest.

I no longer as an adult share a sense of belonging within the church, but I have never lost the feeling while hiking through a forest that I had entered God's house. And I have found a peace, a true sense of sanctuary from the forests of Maine across the Rocky Mountains to planting trees in the mountains of Oregon for the BLM as a teenager. What you allow to trespass in our forests today will be the lessons that either raise or diminish the degree of respect held by the next generation. Please hold so precious a gift sacred.

I also recall sitting late at night next to my father within a woods along a river corridor. We listened in the dark as the call of great horned owls drifted up and downstream. The forests have so much to share and say to us. Take the time to teach this generation to slow down and listen. Let them ride their motor bikes someplace else. They will grow older, and grateful if you do.