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ABOUT THE GEORGE WRIGHT FORUM

The George Wright Forum was the journal of the George Wright Society from 1981 through 2018, published in 35 volumes with a total of 125 issues. Its mission was to “examine critical issues and present new research related to parks, protected areas, and cultural sites around the world.” The hallmark of the journal was its interdisciplinary approach, covering all fields relevant to natural and cultural heritage stewardship.

Early volumes of the journal did not carry dates embedded on each page, so that information is provided on this cover sheet.

The George Wright Forum ceased publication at the end of 2018. Beginning in 2020, it is continued by *Parks Stewardship Forum*, an open-access journal co-published by the George Wright Society and the University of California, Berkeley, Institute for Parks, People, and Biodiversity. *Parks Stewardship Forum* continues both the mission and the interdisciplinary approach of *The George Wright Forum*. The first volume of *Parks Stewardship Forum* is denominated as Volume 36 to indicate this continuity. *Parks Stewardship Forum* is published at <https://escholarship.org/uc/psf> and has been selected by the Library of Congress to be archived as “an important and valuable addition to our collections and to the historical record.”

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ABOUT THE GEORGE WRIGHT SOCIETY

The George Wright Society supports parks, protected/conserved areas, cultural sites, and other kinds of place-based conservation by encouraging communication among and convenings of researchers, managers, educators, practitioners, and the public to facilitate informed decisions and actions that embrace our values.

GWS is a membership organization and we would welcome your support. To find out more, or to donate, please go to <https://www.georgewrightssociety.org>.

This is the third issue of The George Wright FORUM and while a retrospective may be premature, still a comprehensive look at what has so far appeared in these pages suggests that this little journal—like all human group efforts—is tending to take on a life of its own.

In the beginning, we could only set the stage. "Dedicated to the protection, preservation, and management of cultural and natural parks and reserves through research and education," we said. That was our stated mission. A reading of the first three issues suggests some pervasive undertones to this clarion chord—considerations that run straight through every subject herein dealt with and on into the innermost lives of each of us who participates in The George Wright Society exercise.

One of these pervasive notes—the moral responsibility that human dominance carries with it—is implicit throughout. So far, it has not been attacked head-on, but its central position is clear as various authors discuss such diverse subjects as "park populations," the role of parklands in achieving what the founding fathers dubbed "domestic tranquility," and the ethical (as opposed to materialistic) motivation behind such movements as the newly formed American Farmland Trust and the Man and the Biosphere's genetic diversity preservation program.

All these subjects, and any others that deal with human use and/or management of cultural and natural parklands, carry within them the solemn—in some cases the dire—responsibility of being human, of "knowing better" than to do much of what we do, and of needing to deepen our "knowing" and to disseminate it more widely.

Whether the message such knowledge carries is couched in the invitational terms of "care" or the threatening terms of "consequences," the public has a right to know what can happen to a world where enormous human abilities to manipulate are coupled with cavalier disregard for basic life support systems over "the long haul."

In Ireland, during the dark ages when knowledge fell into disrepute and disease and ignorance reigned unchallenged, sparks of the light of learning were carefully (and secretly) tended in certain monasteries. Today, although knowledge is rampant almost to the level of "noise," *ENLIGHTENMENT* seems again to be on the wane. At the same time, mounting populations and shrinking resources pose their own kind of threat to prudence and reason.

In this setting, the world's parklands have an opportunity and a responsibility to play a somewhat similar rôle to that of the Irish monasteries: to maintain, to preserve, to use wisely, to study and disseminate as widely as possible the information gleaned—in the interests of "the long haul."

Jean Matthews