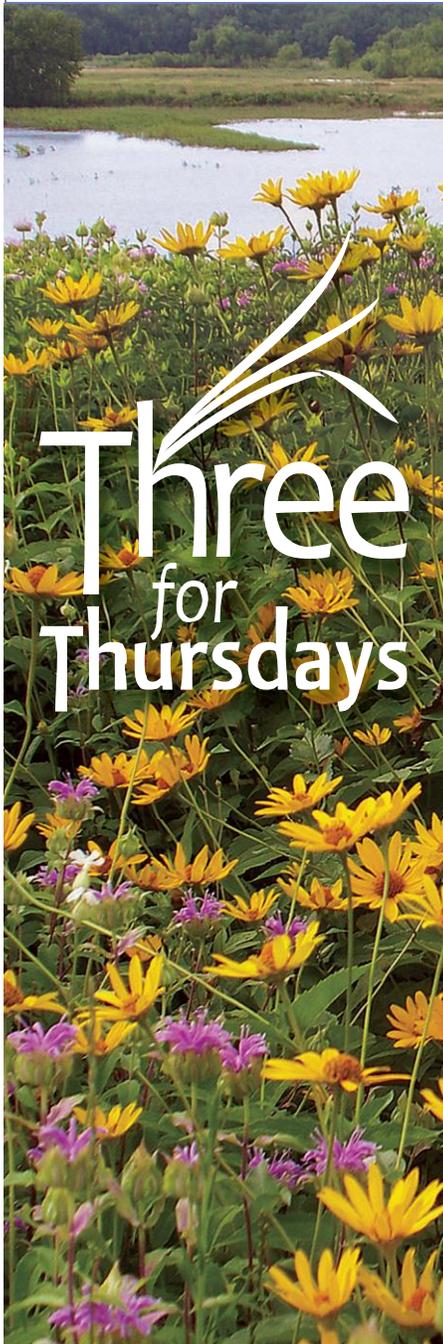


NATURAL LAND INSTITUTE

Conserving Land
in Northern Illinois



The Era of the Sixth Mass Extinction

Not to fill you with alarm...but..."The average rate of vertebrate species loss over the last century is up to 100 times higher than the background rate. Under the 2 E/MSY background rate, the number of species that have gone extinct in the last century would have taken, depending on the vertebrate taxon, between 800 and 10,000 years to disappear. Averting a dramatic decay of biodiversity and the subsequent loss of ecosystem services is still possible through intensified conservation efforts, but that window of opportunity is rapidly closing." You can read the full article here: <http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/1/5/e1400253>

So...A 'New Conservation'?

"The state of nature is a state of almost inconceivable abundance," Monbiot writes. "Ours is a dwarf and remnant fauna, and as its size and abundance decline, so do our expectations, imperceptibly eroding to match the limitations of the present." George Monbiot, from [Feral: Rewilding the Land, the Sea, and Human Life](#),

Yep, this has worried me, and I heartily approve of protecting connected spaces to increase expansiveness and biological interconnections. One of our members brought this book to my attention. I haven't read it yet, however, after reading 'Where the Wild Things Were' by William Stolzenburg, it seems we need some inspiring story, and we may need to re-consider our concept of wilderness, or at least recognize that it is not the wilderness of old. Monbiot is not looking to depress us further, though, but to inspire us: "Rewilding offers the hope of a raucous summer." Keim's review of the book found here:

<http://conservationmagazine.org/2014/10/feral-book-review/>

notes that "this is what conservation is for: beauty, richness, vibrancy. Life. We'll never recover all that was lost, but that's okay. What matters is the celebration and journey of revival. To rewild is to know where we are, learn its history, and ask: Could there be more? Can I help?"

...and an expanded approach to Land Protection

It's called the "Nesting Doll Approach" to protecting wilderness. Guess what? Land Trusts are already doing this, by seeking Conservation Easements as land use buffers around our protected properties. This could become a more concerted effort of 'nesting' of land uses at the boundary lines. Of course, as government policy it becomes an issue...especially if imposed. You can read more here:

<http://conservationmagazine.org/2015/07/a-nesting-doll-approach-to-protecting-americas-wilderness/>

Happy Reading! Kerry

July 9, 2015



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