



Wildlife ecologist with the Lake County Forest Preserves, Gary Glowacki, released 91 Blanding's turtle hatchlings into local wetlands last summer to grow the population of the endangered reptile. The Forest Preserves instituted an official recovery program that includes a head-starting program where eggs are collected from the field and incubated. Hatchlings are then held in captivity beyond the point of extreme predation. Photos and caption details courtesy of Lake County Forest Preserves.




PHOTO: THOMAS BALSAMO

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everything from plants to birds, along with countless other species. Rooted in generous caring, restoration requires the same qualities people are yearning to see expressed in human communities.

Deciding to clean the Mississippi River when he was 17, Chad Pregracke eventually created a not-for-profit organization that has removed over 10 million pounds of trash and planted over one million trees with the support of nearly 116,000 volunteers. Living Lands & Waters brings people together to pick up litter and understand their essential role in combatting pollution.

A caring mobile community—living and working on rivers up to nine months per year—Living Lands & Waters demonstrates selfless giving in all its work.

As we welcome a new decade, let us strive to be mindful of all our relations and lavish them with loving kindness through our actions. 

Nature and Nurture

M“MITAKUYE OYASIN” is a Lakota phrase which recognizes we are not alone but connected to everything around us. Indigenous cultures have used stories for generations to reinforce respect for the Earth, plants, and animals.

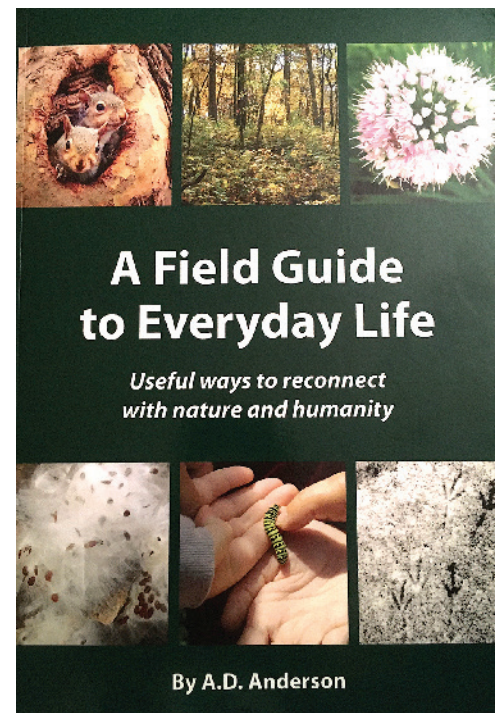
The Onondaga people of the Northeastern Woodlands share the story of a woman who falls from the sky to a place without land and how the animals express compassion toward her by taking turns diving deep into the water to gather Earth so “she will have a place to stand.” (“Keepers of the Earth” by Michael Caduto and Joseph Bruchac.)

A duck, a beaver, and a loon attempt to gather Earth, but cannot swim deep enough. Finally, a muskrat tries. Floating to the surface after swimming as deep as she can to find Earth, the other animals think she is dead until they notice her right paw is held tightly shut.

“She has the Earth, the animals say. Now, where can we put it?” “Place it on my back,” responds Great Turtle.

This parable challenges us to consider the integral role nature plays in our community and the impact our community has on the natural world. Working on “A Field Guide to Everyday Life: Useful Ways to Reconnect with Nature and Humanity” over the course of the last decade, I’ve observed increasing concerns about the environment—both human and natural. We cannot expect to resolve the issues that plague one without addressing the other.

Losing any plant or animal species changes the delicate balance of an ecosystem. Inadvertently introducing species that lack predators leads to monocultures where biodiverse native ecosystems can no longer effectively function. Natural area restoration hastens the gradual return of



A Field Guide to Everyday Life

Useful ways to reconnect with nature and humanity

By A.D. Anderson