

Introduction

From the beginning of human history our species has cared deeply about the places where we live. In fact, understanding our place was a matter of life and death. We all lived in particular ecosystems and were totally dependent on them. With the beginning of agriculture, we began to cultivate nature to suit our convenience. Even during the advances of the Industrial Revolution place mattered, especially to farmers and fishermen. Traditionally, the people of the Paris basin in France divided their places into "pays" or countrysides, each of which had its own personality just as distinctive as an individual person.

Most people I know in my generation had at least one place that they cared about deeply in their hearts. More often than not, these places were in nature. However, in the past fifteen years a critical mass of our young people have had their brains invaded by an alien. This alien goes by the name of electronics. On the average, North American young people spend over seven hours a day, seven days a week staring at a screen. How much time do these kids spend in nature? Zero time. Their places are now fantasy and games and involve zombies and vampires. If they visit a real place it is likely a shopping mall. What kind of parents and voters will these young people be if they grow up?

That is why it is a wonderful idea for Karstad, Schueler and Vetter to take us to a place and involve us in their deep commitment and affection that makes it what it is. They will involve you in their labour of love for "North Russell Red Shale Hill" so that you will know as you would know a partner or a friend. It is my hope that they will show the way for more of us to deeply explore and discover our own special places. If I had one wish for the children of tomorrow it would be that they would follow in the footsteps of these three thoughtful people. If they do, there is no doubt in my mind that the world will be a better place.



Robert Bateman, June 2012