

DISCOVERING A SACRED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LANDSCAPE: HOW TO  
APPLY CHARACTERISTICS OF SACRED SPACES TO THE LANDSCAPE IN  
ORDER TO GUIDE MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE.

by

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(Under the Direction of Alfie Vick)

ABSTRACT

Native Americans believe that there are sacred places that help them define and create a relationship with nature. This belief suggests that man must respect everything and recognize its purpose. Historically, sacred sites have acted as a source of reconnection and revelation. This thesis explores Native American sacred sites; the patterns and characteristics that exist in them, as well as ways designers can gain inspiration from the characteristics to guide the relationship between Humans and Nature. This thesis records firsthand, the existing patterns and characteristics of four Native American Sacred Sites. A qualitative, experiential research model was used to expound upon the sacred patterns defined in Christopher Alexander's book, A Pattern Language. A matrix is constructed in order to compare the patterns found at the different sites, resulting in a new list of sacred patterns that can be used as inspiration for designers to guide man in reestablishing a relationship with Nature.

INDEX WORDS: sacred, Native American, landscape patterns, nature, Cherokee, Plains Indian, sustainability

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, friends and professors who have inspired and challenged me throughout my academic journey.

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## Preface

Throughout life, events take place and we make decisions that direct us down a certain path. However, sometimes it is the decisions made by others that influence and guide our direction. I would like to preface this thesis with a story, a narrative in the tradition of the Native American. This narrative offers the reader an understanding of my interests in Native Americans and their beliefs. This story also tells the origin of a journey that I am now just beginning to understand. This thesis has taught me that there are always more questions than answers. Nevertheless, my hope is that this research will inspire designers to incorporate the sacred into their designs in hopes that we can regain a mindful relationship with Nature. We must first understand and respect the land and understand that all things within it are sacred. Throughout this text I hold the utmost respect and honor for Native Americans, their sacred lands, and ceremonies.

## The Story of the Drums

I had experienced only 15 winters when the ancestors of the Blackfoot communicated with me. My father, an accomplished fly fisherman, planned a family vacation inspired by an article he had read in Men's Journal, which spoke of a Blackfoot man, Joe Kipp, who was a renowned fly-fishing guide in Montana. Fly-fishing in Montana had a world-renowned reputation due to the popular book and film A River Runs Through It. My father proceeded to contact Mr. Kipp and plan a fishing vacation for my family (Mom, Dad, two younger brothers and me) to stay with the Kipps on the Blackfoot reservation.

When we arrived in Montana, it seemed to me as if the land carried on into infinity. The air was clean and refreshing, which allowed the soft and gentle light to reflect off the sagebrush landscape. Mature cottonwoods created an oasis for each isolated home placed randomly along the dirt road.

The seemingly infinite landscape concluded at the edge of a plateau where the Blackfoot Reservation began. The road then traversed back and forth down the plateau until we reached the valley. Joe Kipp and his family were there to greet us outside their home. Our quarters consisted of a modified singlewide trailer filled with bunk beds, all of which resided within a tall fence. Mr. Kipp quickly explained that we should not let my youngest brother, who was two at the time, out of our sight due to a recent sighting of a mountain lion.

We proceeded to settle into our accommodations as my father planned out his fishing expedition and other weekly activities with Mr. Kipp. When my father returned he explained that there would be a tribal sweat (Native American purification ceremony) held later in the week on the Kipp property. We were invited to participate if we wanted, but being a shy and very skeptical young woman I chose otherwise.

Leading up to the sweat, many tribal members began to descend upon the Kipp property to build the sweat lodge and prepare for other ceremonies. Some tribal members wore traditional dress, while others dressed like us. My mother decided to take my brothers and me into town that night for a movie while my father participated in the sweat. I remember leaving the valley floor and seeing a fire blazing from between the cottonwoods where the sweat lodge was constructed.

It was dark that evening when we returned from the movie. As we neared the edge of the plateau my mother stopped the car. We peered out into the valley below and could see the fire still burning among the cottonwoods. We sat there quietly, below the huge Montana sky. We began to hear drums, somewhat muffled yet apparent. We sat, listened and watched. The air was cool, and the night was peaceful and calm.

The next morning at breakfast we spoke about our experience on the edge of the plateau, the calm night, beautiful views and the drums. My father spoke first and exclaimed that there were no drums at the sweat; the rest of the Kipp family reciprocated this sentiment. Then Mr. Kipp had a revelation: We must have heard his great grandfather, who is buried atop the plateau near the road, where we had parked the car. Mr. Kipp proceeded to explain that his grandfather had played his drums for us, which meant that he would be watching over us for the rest of our lives.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

*“Sacred places are the foundation of all other beliefs and practices because they represent the presence of the sacred in our lives. They properly inform us that we are not larger than nature and that we have responsibilities to the rest of the natural world that transcend our own personal desires and wishes.” (Deloria 281)*

#### Purpose and Intent: Confirming the need to connect with Nature

As our oil, gas and water are becoming increasingly scarce, contemporary Americans are being forced to recognize our relationship with the natural environment. Most often we complacently relate to our natural resources with consumptive and self-centered interests. However, we are still inevitably connected to nature. A large portion of the detrimental impacts to the natural ecosystem is a result of human complacency. Complacency occurs when one feels no reason or purpose for involvement. The word complacent is defined as “contented to a fault; self-satisfied and unconcerned.”

(Houghton Mifflin Company)

Many Americans have become complacent regarding their relationship with the natural world. Through the evolution of technology Americans have become distracted, ultimately impairing their relationships with the natural world, as well as with themselves. Richard Louv researched this dramatic human impairment in his book The Last Child in the Woods. Through his research he concludes that this separation from nature contributes to the dramatic increase in cases of ADD and ADHD in recent years.

Louv suggests that a return to experiencing and doing in nature might solve many of these ailments. “If it’s true that nature therapy reduces the symptoms of ADHD, then the converse may also be true: ADHD may be a set of symptoms aggravated by lack of exposure to nature.” (Louv 107-108)

When the health of future generations is at stake there is no room for complacency in our communities. Last year in Georgia water scarcity was a motivating factor for people to recognize how and where they consumed water. This caused many Georgians to fix leaking faucets, as well as learn how to reuse grey water creating a more sustainable water system for their homes. The challenge is to reestablish a long lasting consciousness of how our actions, or lack of, relate to Nature. But is there an ideal path to reestablish this connection?

Traditional Native American values, and those of numerous other indigenous people, teach that the relationship between Humans and Nature is very significant, even sacred. Native Americans teach that it is impossible to separate ourselves from our resources, ultimately understanding that everything is sacred. For example, Native Americans speak of water as, “the sacred water, ” and eggs as “the sacred eggs.” (NPR) This suggests that Native Americans think of their lives as being intimately intertwined with all creation.

All things on this earth are sacred; however Native Americans hold some places as being more sacred than others. (Russ Townsend, May 28, 2008- personal communication) These sacred sites are good examples of spaces in the landscape that idealize the Native Americans’ traditional relationship with Nature. Vine Deloria a Native American and scholar, categorizes Native American sacred places to help non-

Indians understand their significance. This is further discussed in chapter two, however he suggests that there should be locations in the landscape that allow for the opportunity to connect with the sacred. (Deloria 277) Landscape Architects have the ability to create landscapes that provide such opportunities.

Opportunistic landscapes have the ability to create new experiences that can change the current land ethic of Americans. Fostering a new relationship with the Natural World can cause a chain reaction, affecting the well being of all humanity. “Sacred sites and their subtle field of influence can assist in the awakening and transformation of the human consciousness and thereby (help) in the healing of the earth.” (Gray12) Therefore this thesis addresses the question: Through the study of Native American sacred sites, can we create spaces in the landscape that guides man and his relationship with the natural world?

### Organization

Glenn C. Reynolds states in his article, A Native American Water Ethic, that Native Americans believe “humans are part of nature,” not separated from it. (Reynolds 144)

“Traditionally, Native Americans believed that they have an inextricable physical and spiritual relationship with all elements of nature. Most Native American origin myths explain the creation of human beings from the physical world. Since they are the children of Mother Earth, they are part of her. Traditional knowledge teaches that all facets of the universe are alive and interconnected. The stones and trees can hear, see, and act. Animals are cousins, possess consciousness, and

speak in languages that humans understand. The land, sky, and water are imbued with a spirit shared by nature's living creatures." (Reynolds 144)

This concept is radically different from the Judeo-Christian based ethic that perceives mankind as a dominant element, separate from the rest of creation and entitled to all of its resources. Chapter two of this thesis will further discuss traditional Native American practices, values, and present day struggles to maintain such values.

The word sacred is used to describe places, emotions and people that are cherished with special and almost exclusive significance. A place being described as sacred may or may not pertain to a certain religion. However it is usually "regarded with reverence." (Sacred) Whatever one considers sacred has intrinsic power and is separated from the routine of our daily lives. Life is a layering of steps and thresholds in which we must pass through to experience the next stage. In most traditional cultures these thresholds usually include an entrance into a sacred space. Birth, death, and marriage are all stages of life where most cultures venture in or through a sacred space. Each culture has different beliefs of what is sacred. A sacred landscape is not defined by the physical boundaries on the land; it exists as part of a culture. It connects people to their past and embodies people's relationship to the land. (Alexander) The importance of sacred sites and how they connect people to Nature is discussed in chapter three. A list is compiled of patterns and characteristics that define sacred sites as well as describe how one's collective past plays a role in their interpretation of the site. Also discussed are the protection and present-day legalities involving Native American sacred sites.

Chapter four introduces two Native American Tribal groups, the Cherokee and the Plains Indians. The connectivity of Native American culture and the places they deem

most sacred is described through each tribe's Cosmology, how they view themselves within the world. Investigations of four sacred sites that belong to these tribes are examined in order to identify what patterns and characteristics are represented. These Sacred Sites include Bear Butte, in South Dakota, Devils Tower, in Wyoming, the Medicine Wheel, in The Big Horn Mountain range of Wyoming, and the Kituhwa Mound in Cherokee, North Carolina. I am aware that I am limited by my past, non- Indian status, and the heightened sensory instinct of a focused researcher. I recognized these limits from the beginning of my research; however, it is inevitable that I would become influenced at some point during my research.

In chapter five I generate a concluding patterns list and suggest ways in which designers can apply these patterns into the built landscape to enlighten people's relationship to the Natural Environment. I found that many of the characteristics were comparable to certain elements within the current sustainability movement. Might this movement, which spawned such programs as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and the new Sustainable Sites Initiative, sponsored by ASLA (American Society for Landscape Architects), be incorporating characteristics of sacred pattern to bring people closer to nature? To answer this question I chose two sites to compare my concluding sacred patterns list to. This analysis not only will provide insight into the motivating factors behind sustainable development, but will also provide insight into current trends that bring man closer to nature.

## CHAPTER II

### NATIVE AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP TO NATURE

*“Out of the Indian approach to life there came a great freedom- an intense and absorbing love for nature; a respect for life; enriching faith in a Supreme Power; and principles of truth, honesty, generosity, equity, and brotherhood as a guide to mundane relations.”*

*Luther Standing Bear (1868?-1939) Oglala Sioux Chief*

Native Americans are connected to nature both spiritually and physically. Their spirituality is simultaneously intertwined throughout every part of their life and every part of their land. “We can’t practice without the sacred land or the sacred places because this is where we draw our religion from. Earth, Nature, and Land *are* the religion.” (Marks 173)

Native Americans view religion as an “intimate relationship with the land.” (Marks 21) This intimate relationship begins with creation. These myths speak of being born from the earth, thus establishing immediate respect for nature and all things related to Her. This ethic of respect for nature resonates throughout most teachings. The strength and resistance of a community’s ethics to outside forces is directly related to their understanding of place. Traditionally, narratives concerning ethics have been used to strengthen place among native communities. “Stories are reinforced by the Landscape, and traditional interpretations are kept alive: Thus the continuity and accuracy of the oral narratives are reinforced by the landscape.” (Marks 185)

However, the influences of Indian removal, government betrayal and contemporary America have created a struggle to maintain traditional ethics. Today, Native Americans face the same disconnection from Nature, as do most other Americans.

### Creation and the Nature of Religion

Traditionally, Native Americans understand creation to be the spiritual world manifested in the material world. “Everything in the world was a part of the original Creation- the creation that produces and supports life.” (Marks 123) This ethic of respecting all creation (including Nature) became the basis for Native American religions. Western religions are based on theological doctrines and truths whereas native religions are “based on the performance of ritual and ceremonies, many at specific sites, which have the ability to generate new revelations.” (Marks 9) The retreat from a doctrine-based religion allows for personalized experiences to be integrated with collective traditions. (Marks 9)

For these reasons it is difficult to translate Native American spirituality into that of western thought. Tensions between the two cultures have created a communication gap. Nonetheless, for Native Americans, religion is the all-encompassing source for “everything from child raising to crafts, from community relationships to warfare, and from philosophy to storytelling.” (Mails 6)

For Native Americans, each day is a holy event in itself. Historically, the Plains Indians would wake up facing the east to be reminded to “pray to the One-Above and to the Four Old Men for his strength, his family, his village, and his tribe. Such acts of mental and physical preparation gave the people confidence and strength to face the day.” (Mails 6) The One-Above, or god is considered to be the force that ruled nature, literally

a Plains Indian appealed for divine assistance by looking through nature to nature's god. (Mails 6) Offerings and sacrificial acts, such as the spreading of tobacco and cutting a piece of hair or flesh were performed for god in hopes of maintaining spiritual harmony.

Each act in the life of a Native American was considered to be religious and spiritual. They acted out their faith through their daily lives. Their consistent thoughts and actions, stemming from their spirituality, "accounted for the exceptional quality of everything they produced and did." (Mails 9) Their god has ultimate creative power and is "higher than all people and the universe." (Mails 9) He is thought to exist at the center of the sun, allowing him the ability to provide radiant light toward his people. Each tribe has a different name for him;

Crow: First Maker. Pawnee: Ti-ra-wa, Sioux: Great Spirit or Mystery, Arapaho: Man-Above. (Mails 11) Their god was directly related to Mother earth "and was said to have given "them the breath of life, (and was) in charge of all that grew as well as the wisdom necessary for existence." (Mails 11) The name of god is so revered that if spoken "in a Native American's presence, it (brings) an instant silence and a profound shift in attitude toward reverence... god is sensitive, all-powerful, and everywhere present. For this reason, in crossing a very deep stream the warrior sometimes gave the water a material offering, such as a piece of meat or fine clothing." (Mails 11)

Native Americans religious practice contains both communal and individual elements. However a Native Americans relationship with god was not dependent on his community. There was an understanding of the importance of maintaining and strengthening community through religious practice. "Individual worship and service

was carried out in private acts so that one side of the Native American religion remained a very private thing.” (Mails 12)

### Symbolic relationship to Nature

Native Americans’ relationship to nature is derived from their spirituality as well as their physical existence, or shared home. Native Americans acknowledge their close kinship and dependence on animals and the environment. They believe that God put animals on earth to teach men valuable lessons. (Mails 19) Native Americans believed that animals had the same creator as that of man, therefore implying that they were related like brothers or sisters.

For the Plains Indians, the buffalo is regarded as the most sacred of all the animals. “The Sioux believed that everything necessary to life, spiritual and material, was symbolically contained within the Buffalo.” (Mails 20) Figure 1 shows a diagram prepared by the interpretive center at Bear Butte in South Dakota describing each part of

the animal and how it was used in religious practice as well as a resource.


Rawhide	Buckskin	Skull	Brain	Bones	Horns
Shields	Moccasins Tops	Medicine Prayers	Hide Preparation	Fleshing Tools	Arrows Points
Buckets	Bedding	Ceremonial Dances	Food	Knives	Cups
Moccasin Soles	Shirts	<b>Tongue</b>	<b>Teeth</b>	Arrowheads	Powder Horn
Drums	Belts	Food	Decoration	Shovels	Spoons
Ropes	Leggings	Comb		Saddle Tree	Ladles
Sheaths	Dresses			War Clubs	Headdresses
Saddles	Bags			Scrapers	Toys
Saddle Blankets	Quivers			Awls	<b>Blood</b>
Stirrups	Tipi Covers			Paintbrushes	Soup
Masks	Tipi Liners			Game Dice	Pudding
Snowshoes	Backrests			Tableware	Paints
<b>Meat</b>	Historical Records			Toys	<b>Tendons</b>
Raw Food	Dolls			Sled	Sinew
Cooked Food	Mittens	<b>The Buffalo</b>	<b>Muscles</b>	<b>Tail</b>	Sewing Thread
Stored Food	Winter Robes		Glue Preparation	Fly Swatter	Bow Strings
Jerky	<b>Liver</b>	<b>Hair</b>	<b>Stomach</b>	Bows	Medicine
Pemmican	Tanning Agents	Headdresses	<b>Contents</b>	Thread	Whips
	<b>Bladder</b>	Pillows	Food	Arrow Ties	Decorations
<b>Hoof, Feet</b>	Water Containers	Ropes	Medicines		<b>Fat</b>
<b>&amp; Dewclaws</b>	Medicine Bag	Bracelets	<b>Stomach Liner</b>	<b>Scrotum</b>	Tallow
Glue	<b>Gall</b>	Doll Stuffing	Food	Rattles	Soaps
Rattles	Food	Moccasin Lining	Water Containers	Containers	Hair Grease
Spoons	Yellow Paint		Cooking Vessels		Cosmetic Aids
Toys					Baby Power

Figure 1 – A list of what the Buffalo was used for. (Bear Butte Interpretive Center)

The buffalo as well as the circle are symbolic forms of Native American spirituality. Both are represented in tangible form yet their spiritual essence lies in one's perception of the object. The symbolic universal nature of the circular tipi allowed for a distinction to be made between the inside and the outside of the home. The inside represented the finite world of man's creation and the outside being the "infinite home of God." (Mails 25) This recognition of duality humbled Native Americans and created a dependence and self-sacrifice to God. (Mails 25) The circle is also represented in the movement of the sun and the clockwise direction one moves when approaching or walking around a sacred site. Due to this relationship to the sun the term clockwise is

often called sunwise. The symbolic sunwise movement always begins at the southern point, representing the sacrifice of self and life. (Mails 25) The movement continues west, which represents “the joy of youth toward the setting sun,” (Mails 25) and then onto the north where one is reminded of both “night and day, good and bad.” (Mails 25) Finally the spiritual seeker arrives to the east where this journey has taught him how to prepare for consequences, and then completes the circle by returning to the south “and his second childhood, giving back his life to all life, and his flesh to the earth.” (Mails 27)

The symbolic representation of the circle also has many names, “the sacred hoop, medicine wheel, the sacred circle, and the circle of life. The underlying belief is that all life revolves in a circle, an endless hoop tied to the natural and spiritual world. The circle is divided into four cardinal directions, with each direction signifying a different spirit, power, color, and animal form which strength could be drawn.” (Bear Butte interpretive center)

Due to the actions of the European Settlers to deconsecrate and reform the Native culture, a new relationship with Nature began to emerge among Native Americans.

“God has been removed from the particularity of place and extracted from the natural environment. Hence the tendency in western civilization has been toward the triumph of history over nature, time over space, male dominance over female dependence, and technical mastery of the land over a gentle reverence for life.” (Lane 23)

Religious conversion was a common practice throughout the removal of many natives from their homeland. Many Native communities could not physically, mentally, and/or

economically maintain their native lifestyle once assimilation began. They were taught that their traditional ethics and customs were barbaric and not suitable for the time.

Native Americans not only see the essence of creation as a historical event, they also understand it to be part of the present. “Creation is not what happened thousands of millions of years ago; it is what is happening right here and now in this holy place.” (Marks 123) This optimistic outlook concerning time and creation reveals a sense of hope that Native Americans have concerning their people, land, and religion. Today, some “Christian churches are busy trying to revamp their doctrines and programs to fit with the new interest in Indian religious ideas.” (Deloria 35) This has had both a social and legal impact on Native Americans. “Tribal religions were believed to be special communications between spirits and a specific group of people.” (Deloria 35) Opening up tribal religions to non-Indians is a “radical departure from everything we know about traditional religion.” (Deloria 36) Perhaps, just as native prophecy has said, “we are nearing the time when the ceremonies of this world become useless.” (Deloria 36)

However, if we try to make sense of non-Indians adopting traditional native ceremony and religious ways there is a sense of longing for something, which is currently, not present in most contemporary religions. “Thus it might not be a bad thing that ancient truths are understood by a large number of people... (they) might be inclined to believe that Mother Earth is indeed more powerful than human science and technology.” (Deloria 38) A “little humility and respect for the natural world might be gained.” (Deloria 38)

Shepard Krech, in his book The Ecological Indian, confronts the stereotypical image that all Native Americans were ecologists and conservationists. For the purpose of

his research Krech defines ecologists as people who “think of the environment and its components in interrelating, systemic ways,” and defines conservationists as people who “intentionally use wisely to maintain future availability of resources.” (Krech 1) History has revealed that Native Americans were among the first humans in North America to place controls on the natural flow of water.

“The first reclamation development in what is now the United States appears to be the development of dams and the practice of irrigation by the Pueblo Indians, who built their communities along the tributaries of the Colorado and Rio Grande rivers, beginning around 800 AD, reaching its peak around 1275 (Fitzsimmons 140).”

Does this fact negate the notion that Native Americans had little concern for the health of the environment? Krech generated three conclusions about Native Americans and their relationship with the environment: 1. “Indigenous people show command of extensive knowledge of their environment;” 2. Native Americans have a great “comprehension of relationships between living organisms and their organic and inorganic environments (are) ecological, that it is systemic, relational, attentive to interdependencies, and (thus) shows the hallmarks of ecological thought;” 3. History “points to the insignificance (or absence) of conservation until co modification-induced extirpations of beaver, buffalo, deer, and other animals and plants.” (Krech 79) These conclusions suggest that Native communities left only a local impact, however I believe that they fully understood the consequences of their actions in relation to the health of the land to the health of their people. Native Americans might have lacked stewardship toward the environment as we define it today; however they never “lacked respect for their prey or the natural world.”

(Krech 81) This relationship is imbedded in Native American ceremony, tradition, and place. In the following chapter I will discuss this relationship as well as Nature's role in connecting the sacred to our communities and our personal identity.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SACRED: CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

*“A Sacred Landscape is not defined by the physical boundaries on the land. It connects people to their past and embodies people’s relationship to the land.”*

*Christopher Alexander*

#### Considering the Sacred: Defining and Understanding

As explained in chapter one, the word sacred is used to describe anything held at a higher status that we set apart in our daily life. However this separation is juxtaposed by the necessity of an intimate experience, which accompanies each sacred site. It is sometimes easier to distance oneself from that which is not integrated into our daily routine. However, this is the essence of the sacred, the journey and the expanded mind, creating a new appreciation for what is in front of you. In order “to experience a place as sacred (we must) participate knowingly or unknowingly, in a whole history of cultural tensions and conflicting claims, even ecological shifts in the terrain itself.” (Lane 3-4) This implies that we must create a direct relationship with sacred spaces. This involves direct interaction and experiences while using all of our senses. Through culture, Nature is made sacred. However, some may argue that Nature has intrinsic and sacred value due to its adaptation and perseverance through time. Nature does not rely upon our human existence for survival, but humans do rely on Nature for our own survival.

## Characteristics and typologies of the sacred

There are many characteristics and typologies attached to sacred lands and sites. For example, some exist for political reasons and others for cultural and or educational reasons. Many scholars have studied the relationship of different cultures to their environment and identified characteristics of sacred landscapes to these cultures. Clearly, there are similarities and differences to be found among these studies. A summary of this research follows.

In 1998 Vine Deloria generated a list of Native American sacred typologies for the U.S. department of defense. These typologies consisted of: Creation story locations and boundaries, sacred portals recounting star migrations; universal center locations; historical migration destiny locations; places of prehistoric revelations; traditional vision quest sites; plant-animal relationship locations; mourning and condolence sites; historical past occupancy sites; spirit sites; recent historical event locations; plant, animal, and mineral gathering sites; and sanctified ground. (Marks 27) Some typologies deal more with physical patterns that exist within each sacred landscape. According to Christopher Alexander in his book, A Pattern Language, common characteristics of sacred places (based primarily on observations of European landscapes) include: “hard to reach layers of access, waiting, levels of approach, a gradual unpeeling, gradual revelation, (and passage) through a series of gates.” (Alexander 333) Enlightenment and consciousness can occur when a landscape is designed using these patterns.

Sacred Landscapes can include all landscape types such as water bodies, valleys, mountains, deserts, and prairies. The California Native American Heritage Commission created a typology of material elements that are included on or in most sacred sites.

These included “sacred/power; worship/ritual; burial and reburial sites; petroglyphs and geoglyphs; village sites; house pits; camp sites; rock shelters/caves; bedrock mortars; collection areas; lithic scatter; ceramic scatter; and caches/storage.” (Marks 27)

Cultures all around the world recognize places as being sacred. Examples of these include Mt. Fuji in Japan, Mt. Everest in Tibet, Ayers Rock in Australia and the Sacred Groves of Ghana. Rivers are a landscape type that most spiritual cultures recognize as sacred. This is true for Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, and Indigenous cultures (Pearce 310). Most often participants in these religions view water as a purifier, a symbol of new birth and creation. This belief is represented today through rituals involving water, such as the Christian ritual of baptism. The Christian creation story, explained in Genesis 2:6 of the Bible, states that “streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface” of the earth. Also, in Genesis 2:10 the Garden of Eden is described as being the source of four rivers. Today, water is ritually used to symbolize purity and spiritual renewal.

The Ganges River is considered “the most sacred river in the Hindu pantheon.” (Verma) It is called the Ganga Ma, which means Mother Ganges. “The river is revered as a goddess whose purity cleanses the sins of the faithful and aids the dead on their path toward heaven.” (Polidor) The Ganges River travels 1,568 miles from its source in the Himalayan Mountains to the Bay of Bengal. (Wax). It encompasses a river basin that is 200 x 400 miles wide and supports over 1/2 billion people. (Polidor).

“According to Hindu mythology, the Ganges was once a river of heaven that flowed across the sky. Long ago, she agreed to fall to earth to aid a king named Bhagiratha, whose ancestors had been burned to ash by the angry gaze of an

ascetic they had disturbed during meditation. Only the purifying waters of Ganges, flowing over their ashes, could free them from the earth and raise them up to live in peace in heaven. So that the earth would not be shattered by the impact of her descent, Lord Shiva caught Ganges in his hair as she cascaded down from heaven to the Himalayas. Ganges then followed Bhagiratha out of the mountains, across the plains to the sea, where she restored his dead ancestors and lifted them to paradise.” (Polidor)

Today the sacred powers of the Ganges are still recognized by Hindu followers who return the ashes of their dead to the Ganges. This symbolizes a smooth transition into heaven. It is also common for Hindu followers to wear a vial filled with water from the Ganges around their neck for purification. The Ganges River depicts many of the sacred landscape patterns discussed earlier. There is a pilgrimage to the source of the Ganges and the town of Gangotri. This is part of a larger pilgrimage circuit called the Char Dham. Traditionally, this site was hard to reach and symbolized the journey one must take through life before returning to the source (heaven). However, the Hindu’s sacred relationship to the Ganges does not create a stewardship for the river. In recent years, tourists and pilgrims have exploited this sacred journey. Organic waste and industrial pollutants are a few examples of environmental issues that are threatening the true purity of the water. The Ganges River is also threatened by global warming. This is an immediate threat due to the fact that seventy percent of the water making up the Ganges originates at the Gangotri glacier. (Wax)

In addition to sacred patterns and landscape types, there are also four rules that guide the characteristics of sacred spaces. Belden C. Lane the author of *Landscapes of the Sacred* defines these in his book, Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality.

Table 1- Four characteristics of sacred spaces defined by Belden C. Lane

1. “Sacred place is not chosen, it chooses. Sacred space is a construction of the imagination that affirms the independence of the holy. God chooses to reveal himself only where he wills.” (Lane 19)
2. “Sacred place is ordinary place, ritually made extraordinary.”(Lane 19) The discipline and participation of a ritual act enhances and supports a sacred space making it unique. (Lane 19)
3. “Sacred place can be tread upon without being entered.” (Lane 19) The identification of sacred place is intimately related to one’s state of consciousness when experience takes place. (Lane 19)
4. “The impulse of sacred place is both-centripetal and centrifugal, local and universal.” (Lane 19) This is based on the idea that we are all innately striving for centeredness thus leading to awareness of our surroundings and God, who is never confined to one location. (Lane 19)

There is a necessary call to consciousness; a meeting of the experiensor’s mind, body, and place for a space to be considered sacred.

### Experiencing the Sacred

Native Americans often use the experience of a ceremony or the imagined experience of stories to assist in the continued understanding of place and self in relation to time. The

symbiotic relationship between experience, time, and place is important to recognize. It is this relationship that roots the human soul. (Lane 7) Deloria defines two types of experiences, (revelation and reflection) that one seeks when visiting a sacred site. (Marks 26) Through the acts of revelation and reflection one gains a greater understanding of place and self. This understanding creates an “emotional bond between humans and their earth.” (Lane 6) Martin Buber suggests that “all real living is meeting” and meetings serve as trigger points for memory and hope. (Lane18) The landscape is a social being waiting to create a relationship with us through shared experiences. Within a sacred space there are social patterns of “mystery, demystification, and the subsequent reawakening of wonder. Only after recognition will we grasp the full significance of the *genius loci*, the Spirit of the Place...” (Lane 25)

Human perception and state of mind is equally important when experiencing a sacred site. Edward Casey suggests that there are six moments of Nature, patterns of physical form in nature that create a perception of the landscape. They are meant to help “clarify the ways in which a place comes to impose itself on our consciousness.” (Lane 56) They include:

Ambient Array- what distinguishes the place or encircles it, i.e. low lying valley, large inland lake, long mall

Sensuous Surface- what stands out at first encounter, i.e., color, shape, texture

Things- physical entities that are profiled on the sensuous surface, i.e. rocks, names

Ground- Underside extension of sensual surface, anchoring to depths of earth

Arc- that which fades from the edges of the scene, i.e. receding band of land or sea that also serves to hold everything into view

Atmosphere- What embodies “emotional tonality” or “mood,” makes the landscape contain feeling

### Place-making and the Sacred

“Native American’s relationship to the sacred all points to a sense of the sacred that is embedded in place.” (Marks 79) According to Yi-Fu Tuan, place is created and maintained through “speech, gesture, and the making of things.” (Tuan 6) The relationship between place and the sacred are reiterated through the power of words and language. This communication is used to describe places as well as pass along the essence of the place. The naming of a place also helps one manifest a relationship with the space. For Native Americans, place naming indicates the “involvement of the people in and with that place.” (Marks 159) Each sacred place name, being in the native tongue, allows for that language to continue on.

The persuasive tone of ones speech when describing a certain place can change the way one identifies with and denotes it to be sacred. Therefore people can constantly “make and unmake (sacred) places by talking about them.” (Tuan 6) The mental state of a person can therefore redirect one’s perception of a place. The words used in place-making are reinforced through the ritual acts which take place in the space. (Tuan 6)

“Certain localities are sacred because of the sacred objects (temples and shrines) in them. On the other hand, a meadow becomes a sacred place in the duration that an open-air mass is being celebrated there: the holy rites alone give an otherwise ordinary meadow its special significance.” (Tuan 6)

## Separation from the Sacred and Nature

Unfortunately, today we most often maintain the thought pattern that culture exists separately from Nature. This is due to the expanded consumption and newly engineered uses of our ecological resources and cultural demands, which has allowed continuous human control over the natural world. (Louv 26) This breeds a homocentric (separation of people and culture) as well as an anthropocentric (elevation above nature) community ethic. (Coates 2) Richard Louv has coined the phrase “nature- deficit disorder” to describe the effects of living a life separate from nature. (Louv 34) Nature deficit disorder “is the human cost of alienation from nature.” (Louv 34) The effects of this type of separation from Nature include a diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses.” (Louv 34)

Louv believes that the contemporary “American experience of Nature has gone from direct utilitarianism to romantic attachment to electronic detachment.” (Louv 16) This is how he describes the three frontiers of American history. This description of American time and history as a frontier, further reiterates the importance of the journey involved in experiencing nature and the sacred. The first frontier passed with Chicago’s World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893, marking the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbus’s arrival. Fredrick Jackson Turner delivered his famous thesis at the Exposition explaining that the frontier was now closed. Turner saw the frontier as the line that separated “savagery and civilization.”(Louv 17) Turner was suggesting that this distinct line had now been blurred.

The second frontier brought further expansion and cultivation of land for farming, cities, urban parks, and suburbia. Most definitely influenced by the automobile,

Americans had found ways to consume and create goods at a profound rate. The second frontier quickly passes with a 1993 Washington Post article saying that “the federal government dropped its long-standing annual survey of farm residents.” (Louv 18) This was seen as a “symbol of massive national transformation.” (Louv 18) The survey was dropped due to census reports that farmsteads had dropped by 40% from 1900 to 1990.” (Louv 18) This statistic not only speaks of our economic and cultural transitions, it also has larger implications concerning our relationship with nature. Now, fewer children were growing up without family and cultural connections to the land and nature. (Louv 19)

According to Louv, we can currently define ourselves as being in the third frontier, which can be characterized by five trends:

1. A severance of the public and private mind from our foods origins
2. A disappearing line between machines, humans, and other animals
3. An increased intellectual understanding of our relationship with other animals
4. The invasion of our cities by wild animals
5. A rise of a new kind of suburban form (Louv 19)

These trends exemplify a pushing and pulling effect, which create a juxtaposition regarding our relationship between Nature and that, which is considered to be Sacred. We are thirsty for intellectual and scientific knowledge about nature, however we are timid to maintain or even initiate true direct experience in nature. There is no substitute for direct contact with nature.

## Re-defining Nature

Perhaps in our third frontier we have just forgotten how to define nature?

Raymond Williams considers Nature to be the most “complex word in the English Language.” (Coates 1) The correct definition of such a complex word circumnavigates the entire history of human thought, Williams suggests. (Coates 1) “Nature has been variously considered both part of us and quite apart from us, nurturing and dangerous, animate and machine-like, spiritual and material. Nature, like us, has a history.” (Coates 2)

Peter Coates, in his book Nature: Western attitudes since ancient times, describes nature as being defined within five categories. These include “ 1) nature as a physical place, 2) nature as the collected phenomena of the world or universe, 3) nature as an essence, 4) nature as an inspiration and guide for people and source of authority governing human affairs, 5) nature as the conceptual opposite of culture.” (Coates 3) Through these categorizations one can see that nature has both abstract and concrete meanings. (Coates 3)

Through this compartmentalized definition of Nature we can begin to see where and how we can embark on a relationship with Nature. This first category implies tangible experiences with Nature such as swimming in a lake or sitting beneath a tree. The second category, Nature as the collected phenomenon, implies the mysterious spiritual experiences we can have in nature. The third category, Nature as essence, describes how we can approach nature with respect and wonder. The fourth category implies what we can gain from nature and how we are suppose to view nature in relation to ourselves. And the fifth category describes how opposite the functions of nature are to

what we create and define as culture. This fifth category supports the others by pointing out that we should not treat the community that is nature in the same fashion that we treat our own human communities. Nature is beautifully different therefore yielding a greater respect and a more conscious relationship than we generally allow. In the following chapter I will describe the relationships that the Cherokee and the Plains Indians have with Nature. By learning about Native American culture, sacred sites and relations with the land we can gain an understanding of how Contemporary Americans are to approach this renewed relationship.

## CHAPTER IV

### NATIVE AMERICAN SACRED LANDS AND PLACES

*“Native American’s relationship to the sacred all points to a sense of the sacred that is embedded in place.”*

Luan Fauteck Make Marks

#### Description of Process

For Native Americans the continued existence of their sacred lands and places maintain who they are as a people. Tremendous tribal and place knowledge is embedded in these sites and the sacred rituals that take place there. Vine Deloria Jr. says that “Sacred places are the foundation of all other beliefs and practices because they represent the presence of the sacred in our lives.” (Marks 2) Both the Cherokee and Plains Indians have sacred sites that help maintain and define who they are. In this chapter I will give a background summary of each tribe, their beliefs, and the historical struggles they have endured. I will then analyze each sacred site I visited: first giving a brief background of the site which includes its significance, physical characteristics, as well as a description of the social and governmental relations that existed in the past as well as today; second I will give a personal account of my experiences at the site; and third I will analyze the site against a comprehensive list of sacred pattern and characteristics that I have accumulated from literature reviews as well as personal experience.

The list of patterns compiled throughout my research take into consideration the cultural, physical, and personal components, which are needed to bring one closer to

nature. The four characteristics described by Vine Deloria are also taken into consideration in the analysis of each site. However, these characteristics are given their own category because they relate to all three components: cultural, physical and personal.

In Chapter V, a concluding list of patterns, reflecting the sites' similar characteristics, are compiled. The patterns that are found to exist at all of the sacred sites are then further discussed as being potential design elements and inspiration used to bring man closer to nature.

#### The expanded list of patterns

##### **Cultural**

- Native or Non-native consecration- Have natives, and/or non-natives declared this site to be sacred?
- Nature as part of ceremony- If there is a ceremony related to the site, is nature part of this ceremony?
- Burials- Do burials exist on site?
- Myth- Is the site linked to a myth or story?
- Native involvement with interpretation- Are Natives involved in education of the public at the sacred site?

##### **Physical**

- Site-adapted architecture- Are the designed forms on the site adapted to the site or imposed on the site? (Korp 48)
- Dramatic change in the physiographic elements of the site- Is the land surrounding the sacred site dramatically different from the sacred site?

- Dramatic change in the geology of the site- Is the surrounding geology dramatically different from that of the sacred site?
- Dramatic change in vegetation of site- Is the surrounding vegetation dramatically different from the vegetation found at the sacred site?
- Natural world, sacred objects found on site- Are there medicinal plants, significant rocks, or ceremonial objects found on the site?
- Water- Is there water on site?
- Significant views to other sacred places- Are there expansive views to other sacred places of interest?
- Sensitive Ecosystem- Are there fragile ecosystems that exist on site?
- Reclamation- Has there been any land reclamation done on the site?
- Journey- Is there a journey involved within the ceremonial or interpretive experience of the site?
- Christopher Alexander's patterns- What sacred patterns defined by Christopher Alexander exist as part of the site? (hard to reach layers of access, waiting, levels of approach, a gradual unpeeling, gradual revelation, passage through series of gates)

### **Personal**

- Site Programming experiential allowance scale- rate 1-5: one meaning I was kept at a distance from tangible experience (doing experience) with the site and five meaning that I was given complete freedom in my choice of how to experience the site.
- Revelatory site response- Did I feel a revelatory response from my experience at the site?

- Place character- What characteristics of place imposition, as defined in chapter three; did I take notice of (ambient array, sensuous surface, objects, ground arc, atmosphere)?

**Vine Deloria’s Pattern List**

- Historical importance of land- Do the non-natives and/or the natives find historical importance in the site?
- Is the site in a secular place- Does the site exist separate from religion or spiritual connection?
- Revelation of Higher Powers- Have higher powers revealed themselves on the site?
- Revelatory opportunities- Do opportunities exist for revelation to take place on the site that can bring one closer to nature?

Plains Indian



Figure 2 – Map of Plains Indian Tribes (Lowie 8)

The Great Plains stretch from the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in the west, to the Mississippi River in the East and then northward toward Canada. There are many Native American tribes that call this area home. They are all familiar with the tall grass prairie and relied upon the buffalo and fertile river valleys for survival. They lived off the land and with the land. The Plains Indian's respected the land and its many gifts. They were migratory people who used horses as well as trained dogs to help carry their belongings from settlement to settlement. They moved with the seasons as well as with the buffalo because it was the buffalo that enabled survival. Once the tribes became sedentary, first happening along the Missouri River, they built homes called earth lodges. Earth Lodges were between "42'-50' in diameter ...and nearly 11'-13' tall." (Lowie 35) They were also a very "energy efficient dwelling." (Plains Indian Museum, Grinnell 1999) These homes were round with a central fireplace and were thought to have a spirit just as all things in nature do. "The earth lodge formed the central focus of many aspects of Plains horticultural village life." (Wiseheart 64) The earth lodge held a symbolic importance in Pawnee cosmology. They believed that "the earth lodge (was) symbolically considered to be the heavens." (Wiseheart 64) The Plains Indians believed that "there was life in everything" that was made from nature. (Plains Indian Museum, Grinnell 1999) This helped create respect and honor within their communities.

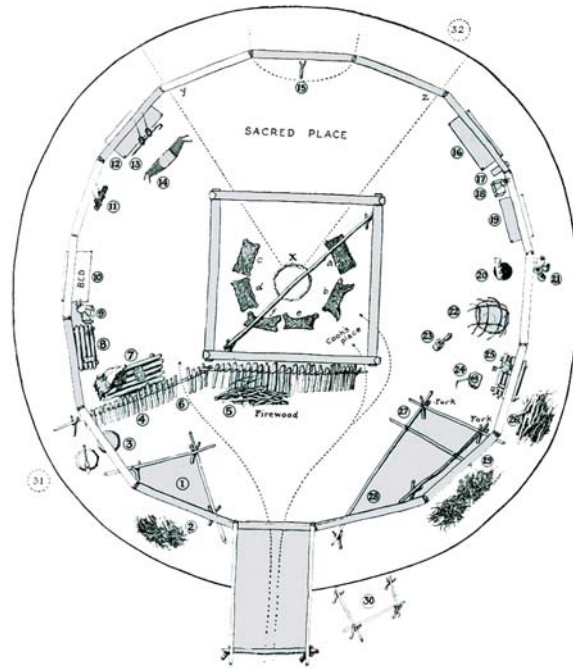


Figure 3 – Diagram of Earth Lodge (Lowie 34)

Other non-sedentary tribes among the plains lived in lodges, or teepees. They were aesthetically beautiful, as well as practical shelters, which allowed for easy assembly and break down. The door always faced east to greet the morning sun. The Plains Indians were very sustainable in where they traveled and settled. They generally moved between a few different camps when the resources had been exhausted. This allowed the land to heal as well as maintain a sense of place within the community. (Plains Indian Museum)

Plains Indians lived off the land and understood their souls to be connected to the land. Therefore maintaining their connection to these specific sites within the landscape is directly related to their communities' survival. Their resources, spirituality, and being are tied up in the land. No apology can heal the wounds that non-Indians have bestowed upon the Plains Indians, unless we grant them their buffalo, land, and freedom back.

Until then the Plains Indians maintain a sense of place and self through spiritual celebration and ceremony.

The Sun Dance is a sacred ceremony among the Plains Indians that honors the sun's powers, "health, prosperity, and the abundance of buffalo herds." (Plains Indian Museum) Fasting, prayer, and dance are all performed as part of the ceremony. The Plains Indians believe that "through the suffering they gain renewal for themselves, families, and the earth." (Plains Indian Museum) The dance is performed within a Sun Dance Lodge. The creation of the lodge is guided by the sun dance chief. The lodge is made of 12 poles, which are oriented east towards the rising sun. (Gulliford 86)

"By the afternoon of the second day, assistants cover the outer perimeter of the lodge with fresh willow branches to give the dancers shade as they rest between dances. Once the dance is completed, the prayers offered, and the people healed, the dancers leave the lodge by mid-afternoon of the last day." (Gulliford 86)

The site is then deserted for the next ten months. (Gulliford 87) The lodge structure is only believed to be sacred during ceremony when tribal members are present. The act of building the lodge and reconstructing the ceremonial place as needed, creates a sense of community for tribal members. (Gulliford 87)

Another sacred structure of the Plains Indians is the sweat lodge. The lodge is used in conjunction with a sweat ceremony, "performed to cleanse and strengthen the body, mind and spirit. It may be used for healing ceremonies, vision quests, or as part of the sun dance." (Plains Indian Museum)



Figure 4 – Photo of Sweat Lodge Frame, Devils Tower

The lodge is made out of a bent willow frame, which is covered in buffalo hides. “Hot rocks are placed in a hollowed area in the center of the lodge’s dirt floor.” (Plains Indian Museum) Many tribes within the Great Plains believe that the heat symbolizes and brings forth different experiences. The Lakota believe that the “hot stones have a spirit or “breath,” that is released in the form of steam when water is poured on them.” (Plains Indian Museum)

The Plains Indians were directly affected by the creation of the homestead act of 1862. This act encouraged westward migration and settlement on Indian lands. Each new settlement, consisting of 160 acres was sold for \$1.25 an acre. The Native Americans were perceived to be non-civilized and barbaric. There was no understanding by the white man of the sacred and symbolic relationship the Native Americans had with their land. Their lands, as well as the buffalo, were seen as a commodity, a resource to be exploited. By 1862 the white man averaged up to 100 buffalo kills per day. (Plains

Indian Museum) The culmination of Native American exploitation occurred on December 29, 1890 at the battle of Wounded Knee. The Plains Indians corralled together on the Pine Ridge reservation and were attacked while performing the sacred Ghost dance ceremony. The “7<sup>th</sup> cavalry armed with Hotchkiss guns” killed more than 300 men, women, and children. (Plains Indian Museum) Accounts describe women late in pregnancy being shot and killed in front of other children. (Plains Indian Museum)

Today most Plains Indians still live on the reservations set up by the United States government. They have had to leave behind much of their migratory ways. However, much effort has been made to maintain culture by exposing tribal youth to traditional ways. An example of this is the tribal heritage education programs established by Plains tribes, helping tribal youth to transition back and forth between a life on and off the reservation. (Plains Indian Museum)

Three Sacred Sites of the Plains Indians were visited regarding research for this thesis. These sites include Bear Butte in Sturgis, South Dakota, Devils Tower in Wyoming, and the Medicine Wheel, in the Bighorn Mountains of Wyoming. I will describe each site geologically, culturally, and experientially in order to thoroughly and accurately compare each site to the sacred characteristics listed in the matrix.

## Bear Butte



Figure 5 – Photo of Bear Butte, South Dakota

Bear Butte rises 4,426' in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Bear Butte is said to be 40 million years old, whereas the Black Hills are said to be 60 million years old. (Bear Butte Interpretive Center) The Black Hills are a spiritual center for the Plains Indians, especially the Lakota Nation. "The sacred instructions (about how one should live) were given to the Lakota by the Creator on Bear Butte." (Gulliford 146) This significant event is the reason that the Lakota view Bear Butte as their Sacred Mountain. Bear Butte has become a place for renewed vision and prayer. The sacred arrows of the Lakota were found on Bear Butte as well. These arrows were taken into many battles for protection from 1817 until 1945 when they were brought back to the mountain. (Bear Butte Interpretive Center)

There are many other significant natural objects that exist on Bear Butte that are considered sacred to the Lakota. There are sacred soils that merge together at points on the butte, signifying places of spiritual communication, as well as specific sacred rocks that are used in ceremony. There is also an abundance of naturally occurring sacred

plants found on Bear Butte. Some of these include Echinacea, said to be a natural anesthetic for toothaches; horsemint; bone knife; little blue stem; sagewort, used in ceremony; yucca, and natural tobacco, used as a spiritual offering to the creator. The tobacco is wrapped in cloth and hung or smoked as a prayer or offering. The smoke is said to carry the prayers to the creator as it rises. (Gulliford 144-148)

There has been much controversy over the management of Bear Butte, as is true for most publicly known sacred sites. In 1871 Crazy Horse, who was born not far from the base of Bear Butte, traveled to the top of Bear Butte as part of a vision quest. He envisioned “much warfare between Indians and whites.” (Gulliford 144) This tension escalated on January 31, 1876 when the “U.S. government demanded the Sioux sell the mineral-rich Black Hills and move onto the reservation.” (Gulliford 145) Crazy Horse and Black Twin refused to move from their sacred home beneath the Butte. At the Battle of Little Big Horn, the Sioux defeated Custer’s men in 1876, however the following winter was extremely harsh and the army had depleted the buffalo herds by incredible numbers so that the Sioux were left with little food to eat. Crazy Horse surrendered and was murdered on September 5, 1877. (Gulliford 145)

In 1961 Bear Butte became a South Dakota state park and in 1973 was designated as a National Landmark. (Gulliford 146) The U.S. recognized that “Indians could not receive full, unrestricted, and uninterrupted religious use of Bear Butte” due to the fact that it would be unconstitutional from the states perspective. (Gulliford 147) By allowing this freedom “the state might be establishing religious protections.” (Gulliford 147) Religious freedom surrounding Bear Butte is especially important to the medicine men “who use herbs and roots and other forms of plant life found on the Butte to cure disease

as well as to go to Bear Butte regularly to renew their power...” (Gulliford 147) The U.S. courts have recognized “that Native Americans have been deprived of the ability to conduct ceremonies at the required time of the year,” however most lawsuits over this issue have failed. (Gulliford 147) There was a wildfire in August of 1996 that Natives say helped to cleanse the mountain from historical strife over ownership and present day visitors who practice their religious ceremonies without “attaining proper spiritual power and humility.” (Gulliford 147)

The management of the Butte as a consecrated site as well as a place of natural beauty and environmental significance has created problems in the past. Solutions are being suggested such as: regulating access to certain places during certain times of the year, and employing one or more tribal members as a cultural advisor to educate visitors on the Lakota traditions. (Gulliford 148) With any sacred site, privacy and solidarity are important. Since educating the public and “transmitting sacred knowledge to outsiders might be considered sacrilegious; therefore information about sensitive sites should be sought only on a need to know basis.” (Gulliford 148)

Inevitably the problem persists, and no one solution will satisfy all parties. “The land managers need to know sacred information to better manage sacred sites, but that information must remain confidential, and in the larger American culture, restricting access to tribal peoples and keeping their intellectual property secret go against the grain of the dominant society.” (Gulliford 148)

### **Experience**

I sit waiting for a rainstorm to pass over Bear Butte before I make the journey to the top. I can hear the thunder in the distance, and the dark clouds are moving swiftly

this way. I contemplate staying for the experience understanding that if I leave now I can see Devils Tower before dark. This inevitably is the struggle inside each of us, the rush against time. We must surrender this worry if we are ever going to allow the sacred to penetrate our minds and our hearts to its fullest potential. The temperature begins to drop as the storm reduces its distance to the Butte and me. The crickets begin sounding off their intuitive warning signal of what is to come. The wind stirs the leaves of the surrounding Aspen and Elm trees. They too can sense what is to come. They will soon be grateful for the rain that will promote a happier and healthier existence for all vegetation in this arid climate. The prayer cloths signal the direction of the storm as they are now parallel to the ground and pointing southwest. The storm without much auditory warning sounds off loud, straight above my head. The noise echoes throughout the valley. I wait a moment but there is no lightning.

The Native women who have been sitting below me at the picnic table now walk to the Northeast side of the parking lot to where the trail begins. They are wearing solid colored shirts, one blue and the other green. They are carrying with them solid colored prayer cloths with the presumed purpose of offering up these prayers to the creator. Perhaps they believe that the wind or water brought by the storm will help deliver their prayers. I see the first inkling of lightning a few miles north of the Butte. It looks as though the storm is passing and my expected experience has been exchanged for one of revelation and new relation.

As I perceive and watch these two women, I feel that they seek forgiveness and understanding. They might perhaps view this site as many Catholic's would view Notre Dame, a place where peace and love are sought and found. Personally I do not feel any

spiritual energy other than the deep respect for the beauty and wonder of nature that I was taught by my parents and other educational programs in my past. However as I watch these two women tie their colored pieces of cloth in trees near the base of the Butte, something shifts. I then watch them pray holding their hands out to the tree and then pray once more holding the hands of each other.

I now understand why this place is sacred. It is seeing their dedication, faith, honor, and humility that inspire me to continue to visualize hope for their people. For this reason it is necessary that our sacred sites and landscapes remain as places for reflection, revelation, and celebration.

### **Devil's Tower**



Figure 6 – Photo of Devil's Tower, Wyoming

Devils Tower resides in Eastern Wyoming close to the Black Hills. Archeological discoveries show that native people have lived near the tower for 10,000 years. “As time passed, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Crow, Kiowa, Lakota, and Shoshone all

developed cultural and spiritual connections with the tower.” (Devils Tower Interpretive center) Plains Indians, as well as the Cherokee, bestow value in the names of places. Each of these Plains Indian tribes has a different name for what is now known as Devils Tower.

Table 2- Native Names for Devils Tower

Lakota: Nato Tipila (Bear Lodge)
Kiowa: Tso-I-E (Rock Tree)
Assiniboine: Wax? Ank? Sija Tibi (place where bear live)
Mandan: Mahdo Wakupe (Bears Hat)
Arapaho: Woon-Nlli Non ( Bears Tipi)
Crow: Daxpitchee Saa (Bears home)
Cheyenne: Nakovehe (Bear Lodge)
-Interpretive center at Devil’s Tower

Each name is significant and personal to each tribe; however there are similarities, which directly relates back to the origin myth explaining the physiographic and geologic character of the tower. Most of these origin myths attribute the rock formation to that of a bear’s claw. Nonetheless, in 1979 natives lost their lobby for the tower to be named Bear-Lodge. They felt that the name Devils Tower insinuated negativity. (Interpretive center at Devils Tower)

Non-Indians began exploring the area in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, followed by fur traders and the US military expansion west in the 1850’s. The first ranchers entered the region in 1879. “Despite the loss of their homelands, the Indian people have maintained their

connection with the tower. It remains central to their spiritual landscape.” (Interpretive center at Devils Tower) In 1875 the Newton-Jenny Expedition took the first photograph of the tower. And in 1892 William Jackson photographed the tower that was incorporated into his exhibit at the World Columbian Exposition, meant to illustrate his theory that the west had been conquered and was now closed. In the 1880’s, Fourth of July celebrations began at the tower as more ranchers and homesteaders arrived in the area. In 1891, the US government included the tower in its list of forests for preservation, and in 1906 President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed Devils Tower the first National Monument under the new Antiquities Act. (Gulliford 162-163)

### **Geology**

“Sixty million years ago, Devils Tower originated as hot magma (molten rock). As it cooled and shrunk underground, stress points were created. These points then cracked outward “in three directions at 120 degree angles. As the cracks continued to expand they eventually intersected other cracks, forming six sided columns. (Interpretive sign at Devils Tower) These “symmetrical columns are the tallest (some more than 600 ft.) and widest (10’ to 20’) in the world.” (Interpretive sign at Devils Tower) The tower was then, and still is emerging through the erosion of the surrounding land. Today the tower stands 867’ high, and is 1,347 acres wide. (Gulliford 162) Geologists agree that there was an igneous intrusion; however there are three scientific interpretations of the towers original size and shape. (Interpretive sign at Devils Tower)

Table 3- Three possible descriptions of how Devils Tower was formed

1. Igneous stock interpretation: The tower is an irregularly shaped, igneous intrusion called a stock. It was formed when magma cooled and crystallized before reaching the earth's surface.”
2. Laccolithic interpretation: The tower is the remnant of a mushroom-shaped, igneous intrusion. As with the igneous stock, the magma solidified before reaching the earth's surface.
3. Volcanic Plug: The tower is a cylinder-shaped igneous intrusion, part of the plumbing system that fed a volcano. The pipe feeding the volcano became plugged when the magma solidified underground.

-Interpretive sign at Devils Tower

### **Spirituality**

For the Plains Tribes, “the Tower is vital to the health of (their) nation and to (their) self-determination as a tribe. Those who use the butte to pray become stronger and gain sacred knowledge from the spirits that helps... preserve (the) Lakota culture and way of life. They become leaders. Without their knowledge and leadership, (Native Americans) cannot continue to determine (their) own destiny.” (Romanus Bear Stops-Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe) Tribal members still incorporate the tower into their spiritual lifestyle by holding ceremonies and hanging personal prayer cloths on trees throughout the encompassing area. The summer solstice is one of the most sacred times at the tower for Natives. They hold sweats and Sun Dance ceremonies at the tower.

## **Climbing**

Due to its odd formation and majestic place among the landscape, Devils Tower has always attracted explorers and adventure seekers. Thus it is a very popular destination for rock climbers. This however creates a controversy as natives feel that Devil's Tower is a sacred place and thus climbing it is sacrilegious. "It affects us psychologically and spiritually...When people climb on this sacred butte and hammer metal objects into it, the butte is defiled and our worship is intruded upon. It is like they pounded something into our bodies." (Arvol Looking Horse (Sioux) 1996)

These two land uses create a difficult management situation. How should management respect the Native tribal members as well as run and operate the site as a National Monument, open to the public. To mitigate this situation the Devil's Tower climbing management plan was initiated and proposed a "voluntary climbing closure during June- a month when American Indians participate in traditional cultural activities in the park." (Interpretive sign at Devils Tower) This was intended to be a demonstration of respect towards the Plains Indian tribes. Most climbers do observe the voluntary closure however, there are some that feel this violated their first amendment rights and refuse to recognize the voluntary ban. These climbers filed a federal lawsuit, but the judge ruled that they had no standing to sue. (Interpretive sign at Devils Tower) On my site visit I observed no literature or sign at the climbers' registration booth about the spiritual significance of the tower. Which leaves climbers uneducated about the Native American's wishes.

## **Experience**

I arrived at Devils Tower early in the morning in hopes of beating the crowds. I visited the tower a few years ago, but hadn't realized the spiritual significance of the place at the time. I set out on the trail that circles the tower. The trail was paved, probably for ADA purposes; nonetheless, this disappointment clogged my thoughts. How was I to get a real understanding of the place if I was insulated from the very dirt it was made of? This situation pushed me to walk faster and experience less. I had to force myself to find a bench and quiet my mind. A young boy and his brother passed by trying to out run each other around the tower. What were they going to remember of this place? I saw some climbers making their way up one of the cracks made by the aged molten rock. The spiritual debate was starting to hit home. I myself am a climber and find nothing more humbling and spiritual than to be high upon a rock ledge. It is then that I realize my place in this world, and feel at the mercy of nature. I understand the detrimental effects of the scarring methods used by earlier climbers who would hammer protection into the rock. But today, climbing is a much more sustainable sport and protection is almost never left in the rock. Most climbers don't view climbing as a means of conquering nature, rather as a means of synergizing with nature. For me, climbing is a ceremony of renewal and awakening.

## Medicine Wheel



Figure 7 – Photo collage of Medicine Wheel

The medicine Wheel lies 80' in diameter in the Bighorn National Forest of north central Wyoming. This site was most likely constructed between 1200AD and 1700 AD, however “the exact date has not been determined.” (National Forest brochure) The wheel exists at an elevation of 9,642 feet, within an alpine environment, which provides few trees and/or shrubs and little to no shelter. This is a harsh winter environment, which leads one to assume that there were only visitors to the site during summer months.

At the center of the wheel, there is a central cairn (pile of rocks) which “once occupied a large buffalo skull and acted as a place for prayer and offering.” (National Forest brochure) From this central point there are spokes which radiate to the outer rim of the circle. There are six smaller cairns placed around the rim. Five of these cairns touch the outer rim and one is placed outside the circle. (National Forest brochure) Some of the cairns are placed in relation to the cardinal directions. The central cairn is much larger than the rest and measures 12' x 7'. (National Forest brochure) The rocks from which the wheel is made of are local to the mountain where it lies. Nobody is quite sure

who built the wheel. There are “dozens of wheels scattered across the Northern Great Plains and Southern Canada,” yet this is the largest. (Gulliford 135)

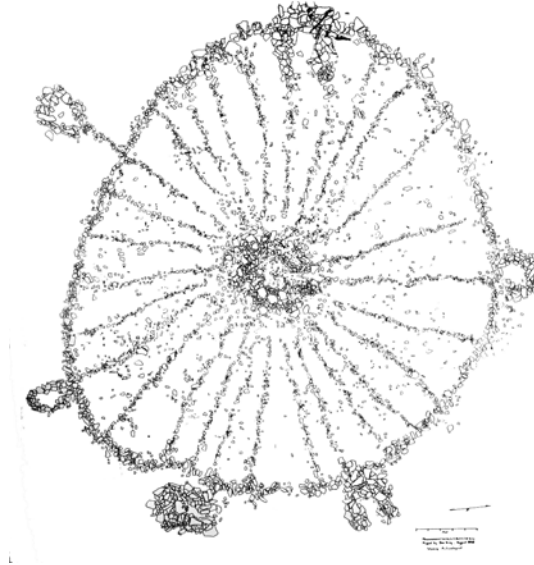


Figure 8 – Diagram of Medicine Wheel Rock Layout (Gulliford 137)

No specific artifacts have been found at or near the wheel which could indicate who constructed the wheel. Some suggest that the “spoke-like structures resemble the Sun Dance lodge, or Medicine lodge associated with the Plains Indians spiritual traditions. However, other researchers and scientists “suggest the medicine wheel is an aboriginal astronomical observatory.” (National Forest brochure)

The Crow believe that the wheel was built “before the light came,” and acts as a guide for building tepees. (National Forest brochure) At present there are no concrete answers as to who actually constructed this landmark. “The medicine wheel is said to have been the site where Red Plume, a crow chief, found spiritual medicine at the time of the Lewis and Clarke Expedition.” (National Forest brochure)

“The legend states, that following four days without food or water, Red Plume was visited by little people (animals) who inhabited the passage to the Wheel. They

took him into the earth where they lived and told him that the red eagle was his powerful medicine guide and protector. He was told to always wear the small feather from the back of the eagle above its tail feathers. Thus, Red Plume received his name. Upon his deathbed, he told his people his spirit would live at the Wheel and that they might communicate with him there.” (National Forest brochure)

For all Plains Indians who view the medicine wheel as a sacred place, they find great power and strength in its circular form. “The circle is the essence of the Native American life. “ (National Forest brochure) Many people journey to the wheel while on a vision quest, while others visit to pray and give offerings. These offerings are tied to the ropes, which mark the edge of the wheel and the separation of the sacred space and the secular space. Those that are Native and wish to conduct a ceremony are allowed inside the wheel while other visitors are kept on the outside of the rope. The Medicine Wheel was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1970 and in 1996 there was a Historic Preservation Plan developed for the site. The Medicine wheel Preservation Plan “has become a model for management of sacred sites across the country and for many federal agencies.” (Gulliford 143) “The plan’s purpose is to ensure that the medicine wheel and medicine mountain are managed in a manner that protects the integrity of the site as a sacred site and a nationally important traditional cultural property.” (Gulliford 135) Today the wheel is sought out as a site for seeking “spiritual harmony with the powerful spirits there.” (Gulliford 136) “Prayers of thanks (are) offered for all creation as well as for loved ones, and atonement is sought for harm done to mother earth.” (Gulliford 136) “All of this is done so that spiritual harmony will be our constant companion throughout (the) year.” (Gulliford 136) “Each different practitioner acts within a deep and complex

spiritual tradition, but within that tradition he acts as his own direct connection (with the Creator) when the Spirit moves him..." (Gulliford 143)

### **Experience**

The drive to the Medicine Wheel took me from the desert valley floor to the high alpine environment of the Bighorn Mountains. Of all the sites in the study, I was most anticipating this one. The parking lot was quite full as I started out on the mile and a half journey to the top of the ridge and the Wheel. Snow banks still existed next to the wide trail that wound around a mountainside and above the tree line before reaching the ridge. The wheel was marked by a rope and wood post fence. There was a non-Indian interpreter at the wheel to answer questions.

As I approached the wheel there was a sign directing me to walk clockwise around the wheel. As I walked around I was moved by the multitude of sage, and pieces of colored cloth tied to the ropes. There were also shells and offerings inside the rope fence. It began to dawn on me that these were offerings and prayers, people's hopes and dreams tied up in a little bundle of cloth. These small tokens were linked to the souls of people who visited the site. This is what made the site sacred, the significance and importance people placed on the site.

There were both non-Indians and Natives performing personal rituals. They were raising their hands to each cardinal direction and reciting prayers. There was a native woman performing a ceremony inside the medicine wheel while a non-Indian followed her on the other side of the rope imitating her movements. Many people visit these sacred sites that are non-Indian, seeking their own spiritual awakening. Which prompts the question, at what point does freedom of religious expression become disrespectful to

the Native populous? The exploitative actions of the lady on the outside of the rope seemed to be disrespectful. So much of Native spirituality is linked to their culture and history that one would think that any non-Indian would not be able to find complete spiritual renewal through native rituals.

## Cherokee

### **Spirituality and Culture**

Thousands of years ago the Cherokee began creating a distinctly “Cherokee way of life, with patterns of belief and material culture that survive to this day.” (Duncan 9) Their creation story suggests that they originated from a group of islands south of where they eventually settled. There were seven groups of people that were brought back together after making the Journey from their island homeland. From these groups, the seven clans of the Cherokee were born. These clans guided the Cherokee in their social interactions as well as their vocation. These clans include:

Table 4- Cherokee clans

Wolf clan: the largest and most influential clan, said to provide war chiefs

Deer clan: generates the fastest runners and deer hunters

Bird clan: skilled at using blow guns and hunting birds

Blue clan: clan of the medicine people

Long hair clan: keeper of peace

Wild potato clan: gathers the food

Paint clan: decorates the faces and bodies for ceremony and war

-Museum of the Cherokee, Cherokee, NC

The clan affiliation was passed down from the mother to her children and established who could marry whom. “People of the same clan did not marry each other.” (Duncan 11-12) The woman’s role in the Cherokee culture was incredibly powerful and significant. Not only were the clans established through the mother, the “woman (also) owned their houses and fields, and passed them from mother to daughter.” (Duncan 11) The first Cherokee woman was named Selu, whose name reflects the significant Cherokee crop, corn. (Duncan 9) Growing corn was an important part of the Cherokee way of life. Tribal women also continued to gather “wild foods from woods and fallow fields like nuts, wild greens, fruit, and berries.” (Duncan 91) Where as the men spent most of their time hunting and fishing.

Well-organized and permanent villages were created so that tribes could be more productive and yield a larger crop. Three significant cultivated crops of the Cherokees were corn, beans, and squash. These were called the three sisters. (Duncan 11) The Cherokee settled in fertile river valleys and built their homes around a central plaza where ceremonies, dances, and games were played. A council house was built at the end of the plaza and housed the sacred fire. The sacred fire symbolized the “creator and embodiment of the spirit of the town.” (Duncan 10) For this reason, the Cherokee were also called the fire people or “red fire men.” (Museum of the Cherokee Indian)

### **Rituals**

The Cherokee held an ethical belief called “The Right Way” which is a philosophy of seeking balance in the world and embracing harmony. “This has always been at the core of the Cherokee spirituality. To the Cherokee, living the “right way” meant being in balance physically, mentally and spiritually.” (Museum of the Cherokee

Indian) This philosophy is also called Duyuktu, which meant “living the right way in nature- taking only what was needed and using plants not only for food but also medicine.” (Museum of the Cherokee Indian) This philosophy also reflected how an individual lived his or her life in relation to the village as a whole. “The rights of the individual were balanced with the good of the whole, resulting in great personal freedom within the context of responsibility to the family, clan, and tribe.” (Duncan 10) One was said to be a “real person: Ani-yuwiya,” if his or her physical, intellectual, and spiritual essence was in balance. (Duncan 10)

The Cherokee had many ceremonies and rituals that helped maintain personal and tribal balance. One of these rituals was called “going to water.” (Duncan 11) This was a purification ritual, which took place daily in the traditional Cherokee lifestyle.

“Everyone entered a stream near their village, faced east, and prayed to seven directions: the four cardinal directions, the sky, the earth, and the center-the spirit.” (Duncan 11) During this ritual “they gave thanks for a new day, washes away any feelings that might separate them from their neighbors or from the creator, emerging cleansed physically, mentally, and spiritually.” (Duncan 11)

The stomp dance is another Cherokee ceremony used to bring the individual as well as the tribe back in balance. The space where the ceremony was held was called the stomp ground. It consisted of four to seven arbors in a circular formation. The dance occurred in a counter clockwise motion next to a fire in the center of the ceremonial space. The dancers perform the ceremony while keeping their hearts close to the fire. Both men and women perform in the ceremony, lining up next to a tribal member of the opposite sex. Participants wore shells that rattled as they dance creating music for the

creator. The fires that the ceremony takes place around is contained by four logs which align with each cardinal direction. (Cherokee Nation Enterprises) Cherokee's believe in three spirits, the mother, the father, and the child. According the Crosslin Smith, a Cherokee medicine man, "we must honor everything. The object is to have the spirit, know where it comes from, respect yourself, offer yourself, and honor past spirits." (Crosslin Smith 5/9/2008- personal communication) Medicine men use energies from the creator to guide them in the art of healing. Through meditation the medicine men are enlightened and then guided to a certain plant that will be used in the healing. "Each plant has a spirit and that plant takes only what it needs from the earth." (Crosslin Smith 5/9/08-personal experience) Therefore each medicine man is conscious of what and how much of each species he takes from the earth. Much of the healing of the patient is embodied in the mental receptivity of the patient to the medicinal treatment. The patient must have trust, honor, and confidence in the healing methodology.

### **Cherokee Language**

The essence of Cherokee culture exists in their native language. Their language not only embodies the words and definitions of the people, it also describes their thoughts. For example there are twenty-two Cherokee words that mean relationship. (Cherokee Nation Enterprises) Due to this elaborate means of communication, the Cherokee feel that they will gain power and equality as a nation by preserving their language.

Sequoyah developed the Cherokee language, originally part of the Iroquoian language family, into a written form in 1821. At this time the Cherokee were a sedentary population and fully integrated into the American culture. The creation of a written form

of their language helped to establish equality between the Cherokee and the Americans. There are 86 characters in their written language; and within a year of introduction, 90% of the Cherokee people could both read and write using the syllabary, a rate of literacy unparalleled in the US at the time, or even today. (Cherokee tourism) Due to this high literacy rate, the Cherokee were able to successfully create a newspaper in 1828 called the Cherokee Phoenix. (Cherokee Tourism)

### **Trail of Tears**

The United States government felt threatened by the Native American tribes throughout the country. In 1802 Jefferson's attempt to move all native tribes west of the Mississippi began. This form of purification created political, cultural, and spiritual struggles for the Cherokee. New Echota, in northern Georgia, was the central location where the fate of the Cherokee nation was decided. There not only existed pressure from the US government to relocate west of the Mississippi, but there was political tension within the tribe itself. The mixed blood Cherokee (Cherokee women and white men) were considered the elite Cherokee due to their political power, economic wealth, and the ensued social power gained by a white man introducing his genes into a Cherokee clan.

In 1830, congress passed the Indian Removal Act of which the Cherokees were the most resilient out of all the Native American tribes. However, members of the Cherokee nation who sought a more traditional lifestyle had been moving west since the 1790's (one of those being Sequoyah). It wasn't until December of 1835 that a group of Cherokee leaders signed the Treaty of New Echota, warranting the relocation of the Cherokee nation west of the Mississippi. In 1838 people were torn from their homes and brought to the stockades. In May of 1838, they were organized into groups, ranging in

size from 700-1,600. (Trail of Tears Association) They then set out on their journey west to Oklahoma, totaling 850 miles. Three main routes existed, the northern land route, the southern land route, and the water route. (Trail of Tears Association) Approximately 3,000-4,000 Cherokee were lost due to the harsh winter and disease along the trail. (Trail of Tears Association) This as well as the sadness people felt for leaving their home accounts for the journey being named the Trail of Tears.

Today there are three recognized bands of the Cherokee nation, one in Cherokee North Carolina and the other two in Tahlequah, OK. The Cherokee nation as a whole still endures the effects of the trail of tears and the removal. Tribal integration as well as life on the reservation still creates cultural and political struggles. The reduction in the number of Native Cherokee speakers has had a profound impact on the Cherokee nation as a whole. Many myths, medicinal plants knowledge, and cultural traditions have been lost. However today the Cherokee have created an immersion program for all school children in hopes of maintaining what knowledge is left.

### **Kituhwa**

The Kituhwa mound lies in Cherokee, North Carolina and is considered to be one of the most sacred sites of the Cherokee. (Jace Weaver-5/19/08-class lecture) The name Kituhwa is reminiscent of what the Cherokee used to go by before non-Indians renamed them. They use to call themselves “Ani-Kituhwa.” (Duncan 73) This naming is now a linkage to Cherokee life before the Trail of Tears, when they live in their homeland. The term Kituhwa is not just a place it defines their history and strengthens them (Duncan 73)

Historically, “Kituhwa was the first Cherokee village, and the Kituhwa mound was its center.” (Duncan 73) The sacred fire was held in the Kituhwa village, which sat

in a lush valley running east and west next to the Tuckaseegee River. There are clear views from the river valley looking toward four other significant mountains of the Cherokee. In 1730 the Kituhwa mound was said to have a town housed atop its 15-20' summit that kept the "eternal flame." (Duncan 73) "The eternal flame symbolized the presence of the creator and the life of the town." (Duncan 73) "Once a year, all fires in the village were extinguished and then ceremonially rekindled from this sacred fire." (Duncan 73)

The townhouse was said to be "thirty feet in diameter, the sides being of short logs, not seen upright but horizontally and dove tailed, as in the ordinary log house, and carried up to a height of about six feet." (Mooney 170) The town house was also used in the green-corn dance and other ceremonies. (Mooney 170)

The Kituhwa mound and the land surrounding it has changed ownership and use since the Cherokee stopped inhabiting the lush river valley. The Kituhwa mound "passed out of Cherokee possession from 1820-1996." (Duncan 73) At this point the mound was reduced in size to only six feet due to farming practices. In 1996 "the mound and the 300 acres surrounding it were brought back by the Eastern Band" of Cherokee. (Duncan 73)

When you ask a Cherokee where their home is, it is equally asking them where their eternal flame is. Home is synonymous to flame, place, and heart. Kituhwa is a sacred place, a power place, a white place, and a peace place. (Russ Townsend, 5/28/08-personal communication)

### **Experience**

We arrived at the mound as a class of more than fifteen. Russ Townsend a Cherokee archeologist, whose research is helping to preserve the site, granted us

permission to walk on the mound. It was overcast and on the verge of raining, however there was a sudden urge to run fast atop the mound like a child. As I ran up the mound I was reminded of my childhood, playing atop hills of dirt. But was this the experience that a native Cherokee might hope a visitor to have? As I reached the top, the elongated valley was realized. The natural beauty that stood before me tempered my child like actions. These two experiences, play and a renewed consciousness for natural beauty, must be considered to be the key to what connects one to Nature.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUDING CHARACTERISTICS

*“The symbiotic relationship between experience, time, and place roots the human soul.”*

Belden Lane

#### Lesson Learned

The goal throughout my research was to conclude this thesis with a condensed and concise list of patterns, inspired by Native American sites, that when implemented into the landscape allows the viewer/experiencer to connect with Nature. However, throughout my research I began to understand that characteristics of the sacred do not easily lend themselves to being compartmentalized or controlled. No one list of patterns could accurately and collectively embody the best possible elements for each person to connect with and experience the Sacred. I do however believe that it is possible for the Sacred to more easily transcend into a particular design through elements controlled by the designer. By creating mindful adaptive site designs and management protocol, a person is given a place and the opportunity to reconnect with a higher power at the site. Also the elements controlled by Nature (not the designer), such as weather, physiographic and geology of the site, elements inevitably bound by ones culture and past, and elements controlled by the Spirit are given the freedom to exist and occur as they will.

Thus my research has taught me that to fully diagnose and treat the impaired relationship between Man and Nature one must recognize the larger framework of the site and community and not be bound by a concrete list. Therefore, I rather conclude with a list of suggested elements and inspiring words for designers to help guide a conscious

relationship with Nature. The concluding sacred patterns list and designers inspiration is as follows.

### Concluding Characteristics and Designers Inspiration

1. *Both Native and Non-Native people have consecrated each sacred site.*

The site must be universal and transferable between people groups. The site must appeal to all and connect to all. The site should be based on an innate human rhythm; one that exudes balance, mystery, time, and flow.

2. *There is myth (culturally significant story) incorporated into each sacred site.*

There is a story associated with each sacred site which adds authenticity as well as human interface. This can be studied at many scales from personal to public. At a personal scale a myth does not have much influence on the community at large. Therefore the myth as well as the site's value is susceptible to extinction. This is the case for many Native American Sacred Sites. The place value is being lost within their community due to the loss of their native language and myths. Myths help maintain as well as create a sense of place. By exposing personal myth to the public, the endangered site gains authenticity and stewardship. There is however the risk of exploitation. Designers must remain sensitive when dealing with myth for this reason.

3. *Each sacred site was designed through adaptation not imposition.*

Throughout the design process the sites natural forms, materials, cycles and ecology should be taken into consideration. By designing in this manor a connection and understanding of place is achieved. A greater consciousness of the natural world and landscape is created. The site then cohesively embodies its

natural order and balance. By combining the site's embodied characteristics with human embodied characteristics the spirit in both the site and the person is reflected and consciousness of the place will occur.

4. *Each sacred site's physiographic characteristics differ from that of the surrounding landscape.*

This natural phenomenon creates interest and wonder for that particular site. This often inspires awe and confusion through experiencing the place, which is juxtaposed with the ultimate human endeavor to find balance. This natural characteristic often creates chaos in the larger landscape as well as in the minds of the visitor. This tension creates an embodied energy at the site, sometimes felt in the minds of the visitor and can only be released through reflection and humility. There is at times a necessary self sacrifice before this revelation can occur. The juxtaposition within the landscape can be used as the primary foci or secondary foci within a design to further express the uniqueness and energy that exists within the landscape. Spaces for reflection should be combined before and/or after such foci to allow further contemplation.

5. *There are significant views to other physical or cultural sites from each sacred site.*

Views and view-sheds (elongated view corridors) help connect the immediate site to the larger landscape. They work directly with the experience of time and journey at the site as well as aid in the revelation and unpeeling of the immediate tension and lack of order. In essence views help to reground and reestablish balance at the site. There is a sense of freedom that comes with the understanding

of this inspiring yet humbling landscape. The fluidity of life at the site cycles around this harnessed power. A great vision and consciousness is gained. The rhythm of differing elements within the landscape and how they affect the senses must be considered. The journey, which propagates an unpeeling of layers, is an important precursor to this revelation. Fragmentation within the landscape must be tempered by balance, light, and awareness.

6. *A sensitive ecosystem is acknowledged at each sacred site.*

All sacred sites are part of a sensitive ecosystem, which adds to its wonder and notoriety. There is a balance of how much human contact should be allowed with these ecosystems. However their uniqueness drives research, education, an understanding of place, and ultimately can help create respect for the site. At times these sites are secluded from the larger landscape. This can skew the rhythm of the site, prohibiting revelation. The energy of the site must be understood as the landscape changes over a large expansion of space.

7. *A journey is involved in each sacred site.*

All sacred sites include a journey that assists in the understanding and experiencing of the place. A journey involves the layering of experiences, the slowing of the mind and the persuasion along a designed path. We can choose to open our minds to what is different, interesting, and unknowing or we can remain within our self, traveling down a comfortable and familiar path. Sacred Sites challenge what is familiar to us by exposing and challenging our understanding of nature and life. The tension experienced along a journey will in the end allow a greater consciousness and balance to be found.

8. *There is a living history that exists at each site.*

History is made possible through the endurance of time as well as human interest. The historical importance of a site can be diversely spread among many different people groups. There is a pre-existing commitment to the site, which coincides with respect for the place. This should be maintained and expanded to include the natural world. Historical significance can be built upon to inspire interest and success of the site.

9. *All sacred sites embody revelatory opportunities.*

Revelation is frequently sought out at many sacred sites. By learning something new and expanding our minds we generate change. However revelation is subject to many predispositions, including one's past experiences, one's current state of mind, one's expectations, and one's ability to recover and allow chaos and the unknown. Resigning control and humbling the mind often achieve freedom. Challenges and transitions throughout our journey in life and at a particular site create self-awareness as well as site awareness.

10. *Each sacred site exists in a secular place.*

This suggests that sacred sites should exist for all people. They should be accessible, welcoming and uniting, not exclusive. There is however preparations of the mind and soul that should take place before revelation and respect for the site and natural world can occur. Sacred sites as well as nature exist for all to experience.

### One step toward Sustainability

It is important to reconcile the cause of mans impaired relationship to nature as originating from ourselves. We must ask ourselves what changes we can make in our own lives before changing our surroundings. We must confront our value systems and be willing to sacrifice and gain new respect through new experiences. We must take chances, even in times of economic uncertainty. As each concluding characteristic unfolded into inspiring text, I began to see similar theme appear with that of the current sustainability movement. The current sustainability movement, and the programs derived from this thought, is a tangible example, which confronts the future of our environment and suggests ways in which we can move forward in balance with nature. Just as Native Americans created values to maintain the sanctity and balance within their culture, sustainability is portrayed today as being a comparable and necessary methodology for contemporary society. Therefore I also ask the question: Do projects that are described as being 'sustainable' embody characteristics of sacred sites? And can they be recognized as places where man can reconnect to nature? To answer this question I will analyze two 'sustainable' projects against my concluding sacred patterns list to see which patterns, if any, are represented. This will grant insight into the motivating values of the sustainability movement. For example does the current sustainability movement acknowledge a spiritual and human relationship to the landscape, or is it exclusively scientifically, economically, and ecologically motivated?

### Important moments in Sustainability

The Brundtland Report, Our Common Future, was the first document to cohesively recognize the elements needed to put sustainability into motion. The word

sustainable, in regards to development, was first defined in the 1987 Commission Report as, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs). This suggests that we should pursue balance as we pursue progress within the realms of our economy, environment, and communities. The commission also emphasizes the importance that this message be transferable between age groups, countries, and communities.

Topics covered in the Brundtland report that compares the relationship between man, nature and place are covered in part two of the report, Common Challenges. These topics include population and human resources, food security, species and ecosystems, energy, industry: producing more with less, and the urban challenge. Much of what is offered within the report is recognized at a global scale and searches for immediate actions that will jump start new steps toward a sustainable future.

Unfortunately, there was minimal decisive action that took place after the publication of the Brundtland report. However the report did spawn other international conferences and agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, which called nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 7% by the year 2012. Agenda 21 also called for all nations to create an “efficient and equitable world economy” that places sustainable development as a priority (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs). The US did not sign the Kyoto Protocol, however many states and cities, have taken it upon themselves to implement the protocol within their jurisdiction.

In 1992 William McDonough & Partners wrote the Hannover Principles; Design for Sustainability, a guideline for designers for the 2000 World’s Fair Expo in Hannover,

Germany. In this call to consciousness, McDonough and Partners expand the definition of sustainability offered by the World Commission on Environment and Development to incorporate ecological processes and intrinsic values. Therefore sustainability should “allow all parts of nature to meet their own needs now and in the future.” (McDonough 3) By allowing Nature to exist and operate freely we are supporting a necessary element in our relationship with Nature and thus allowing opportunities of the Sacred to exist and sites to maintain their intrinsic value.

Sustainable design must be approached holistically for humanity to develop a design process “which enables us to remain in the natural context. Human society needs to aspire to an integration of its material, spiritual and ecological elements. We must employ both current knowledge and ancient wisdom in our efforts to conceive and realize the physical transformation, care and maintenance of the Earth.” (McDonough 4) The Hannover Principles should be considered a “living document committed to the transformation and growth in the understanding of our interdependence with nature.” (McDonough 5) The principles are as follows:

- 1) Insist on rights of humanity and nature to co-exist in a healthy, supportive, diverse and sustainable condition.
- 2) Recognize interdependence. The elements of human design interact with and depend upon the natural world, with broad and diverse implications at every scale. Expand design considerations to recognize even distant effects.
- 3) Respect relationships between spirit and matter. Consider all aspects of human settlement including community, dwelling, industry and trade in terms of existing and evolving connections between spiritual and material consciousness.

- 4) Accept responsibility for the consequences of design decisions upon human well-being, the viability of natural systems and their right to co-exist.
- 5) Create safe objects of long-term value. Do not burden future generations with requirements for maintenance or vigilant administration of potential danger due to the careless creation of products, processes or standards.
- 6) Eliminate the concept of waste. Evaluate and optimize the full life-cycle of products and processes, to approach the state of natural systems, in which there is no waste.
- 7) Rely on natural energy flows. Human designs should, like the living world, derive their creative forces from perpetual solar income. Incorporate this energy efficiently and safely for responsible use.
- 8) Understand the limitations of design. No human creation lasts forever; and design does not solve all problems. Those who create and plan should practice humility in the face of nature. Treat nature as a model and mentor, not as an inconvenience to be evaded or controlled.
- 9) Seek constant improvement by the sharing of knowledge. Encourage direct and open communication between colleagues, patrons, manufacturers and users to link long-term sustainable considerations with ethical responsibility, and re-establish the integral relationship between natural processes and human activity.

The Hannover Principles suggest specific tasks and roles for designers to create spaces that assist in the development of man's relationship with Nature. It is important for designers to find inspiration not only from Nature, but also from other designers and

organizations to assist in expanding the possibilities of creating opportunistic sites for the sacred to be experienced.

### Sustainability Today

One of the most advertised Sustainability standards today is LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. LEED was started in 1993 by the USGBC, United States Green Building Council, to develop a “standard to evaluate a building’s resource efficiency and environmental impacts.” (Kibert 3) From the years of 1993-1998, the USGBC developed the first version of LEED, which tried to resolve any ambiguity about sustainable development and define a clear and concise difference between conventional building practices and sustainable building practices.

There are four certifications the developments can attempt, platinum (being the highest, with 52-69 points), Gold (39-51 points), Silver (33-38 points), certified (26-32 points), and no rating (25 or fewer points). Each development can pursue a certification under six different categories, these include LEED –EB (for existing buildings), LEED-CI (for commercial Interiors), LEED-H (for homes), LEED-CS (for core and shell projects), LEED-ND (for neighborhood development), and LEED-NC (for the new commercial construction of commercial buildings). LEED-NC is the most widely used and has six categories where the development can earn points: sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, and innovation and design process. (Kibert 72) By standardizing the process of certification the potential for advancement in technology, equity, and education is offered. Since the introduction of LEED there has been some skepticism over the economic profitability of achieving LEED certification. However, “a recent report to the

California Sustainable Building Task Force states that a two percent additional investment to produce a high-performance building would produce life-cycle savings that are 10 times greater than the incremental investment.” (Kibert 375) This is impressive when thinking of a \$5 million dollar project, by an additional investment of \$100,000 over a 20- year life cycle the building will save \$1million; this translates to a total “Net Present value of the energy savings of \$5.79 per square foot.” (Kibert 375)

Recently the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), the Lady Bird Wildflower Center, the United States Botanic Garden and many other stakeholders have taken sustainable development standards to a new level. They have created the Sustainable Sites Initiative, which is motivated to “protect and enhance the ability of landscapes to provide services such as climate regulation, clean air and water, and improved quality of life.” (Sustainable Sites Initiative) This initiative is intended to be a supplemental resource to current sustainable design practices, such as LEED, as well as stand alone as a site sustainability tool. (Sustainable Sites Initiative) The initiative began in 2005 and the first preliminary draft of the guidelines was released in November of 2007. A review process was carried out for four months and an updated draft is to be released November of 2008. (Sustainable Sites Initiative)

There are five sections of the initiative, hydrology, soils, vegetation, materials, and human well being. These categories are covered as part of the LEED rating system, however when isolated from buildings and dominate structures they more clearly address the characteristics that are important in creating and maintaining a relationship with nature. For example, the water section suggests that we should promote the reduction of water velocity through infiltration, which will provide cleaner water and “enhance down

stream water bodies.” (Sustainable Sites Initiative) By maintaining inviting water locations in a community you are providing places for people to gather and experience nature. Another example of how the sustainable sites initiative allows man to connect to nature is in the human well being section. This promotes the idea that healthy landscapes hold the ability to heal. This can be accomplished by providing recreation spaces, food production spaces and spaces for social interaction. (Sustainable Sites Initiative)

The preliminary matrix for the Sustainable Sites initiative has many similarities to the sacred patterns matrix derived in the project. This similarity further provides evidence that sacred site characteristics in the landscape provide a way for man to reconnect to nature.

### Sustainable Site Analysis

#### **Site One: Hotel Terra, Teton Village, Wyoming**

Hotel Terra Jackson Hole is part of the Terra Resort group, which offers many luxury hotels throughout the world. This specific hotel is considered to be an “Eco-Boutique hotel (which) combines luxury with contemporary design” and is pending LEED certification. (greenprogress) Hotel Terra promotes that they continue to “push their efforts well beyond LEED criteria... and (are) continually developing efforts to preserve and protect the environment (through) operations while still offering an indulgent hotel experience for (their) guests.” (Terra)

“The design of Hotel Terra is inspired by the stunning natural landscapes of Jackson Hole and its welcoming western sensibility, while also incorporating modern materials, clean lines, and urban touches.” (greenprogress) Some noted examples of sustainable elements throughout the hotel are as follows.

- 100% recycled Eco Shake roof shingles
- Low VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) carpets and pads, sealants, paint, and adhesives exclusively used throughout.
- Energy efficient heating and cooling systems, designed to customize temperature by individual zones, limiting use to specific need.
- Radiant heating in the flooring of the parking garage, which runs along the entire ground level of the hotel, reducing direct heat loss and minimizing energy use.
- Superior air quality will be maintained inside the building by circulating large amounts of outside air into the guestrooms and employing energy recovery technology, which recoups 81% of the heat from the exiting stale air. The system also controls the moisture content in the air.
- Energy Star approved, extremely efficient windows, with Low E, a highly reflective coating that protects interiors from infrared light. This keeps heat inside during the winter and outside during the summer, reducing the need from energy used from supplemental heat or cooling.
- Water conservation systems: dual flush toilets, low flow water fixtures, waterless urinals in Men's public restrooms, and native landscaping requiring no irrigation accounts for a 24% reduction in water use.
- Exterior snowmelt system operated on a thermal and humidity control system, ensuring it is only in use when necessary.
- Natural Runoff Mitigation: runoff water at the building site is collected in an underground tank, filtered, and released at a drip back into the environment, reducing potential pollution flowing into rivers, streams, and surrounding land.

- Fly ash, a coal burning byproduct, is used to replace up to 59% of the cement used in the concrete for the building, reducing landfill disposal of solid waste, energy used to produce the concrete, and the use of natural resources that would otherwise be used in concrete.
- Elimination of light pollution, avoiding disruption of nocturnal environment and migratory patterns.
- Chemical free cleaning and laundry products used throughout.
- More than 90% of the hotel interiors capture natural daylight and have access to outdoor views.
- Exclusive use of non-CFC producing refrigerants.
- Wind power accounts for more than 35% of power purchased for the Hotel.
- 80% Recycled content in the steel used throughout the building structure.
- Reduced particle pollution through used of off-site cutting, prefabricated walls manufactured in an enclosed shop.
- 50% of construction waste will be reused or recycled.
- Use of technology, such as high performance touch screen phones and a single IP cable wiring system, to reduce guest paper use.
- Access to alternative or energy efficient transportation for guests and employees.

### **Concluding Analysis**

Hotel Terra exemplified five out of the ten comprehensive sacred patterns. A complete matrix and explanation of the similarities are at the end of this chapter. There are many facts that hinder this sites potential to connect man to nature. The first is that the sustainability component of the project is secondary to its mandatory profitability.

The second restricting factor pertains to the high-density development surrounding the hotel. Even though Teton National Park is less than 5 miles from the hotel; the dense development creates a blinder to the natural world. The hotel thus feels more like a refuge from the wild natural element outside, rather than a holistic integration of the natural world.

The sustainability components used on this site are largely made up of the available products and processes that reduce energy consumption, which they have turned into a branding mechanism. The LEED certification, while having a positive effect on the surrounding environment and community, in this particular case, stands more for the purpose of attracting a certain clientele rather than inspiring a shift in the actions and minds of those who visit.

#### **Site Two: Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve, Teton National Park, Wyoming**

On June 23, 2008 the friends and family of Laurance S. Rockefeller dedicated 1,100 acres of the JY Ranch to Grand Teton National Park to create a wildlife preserve. “This unique corner of Grand Teton National Park is (meant to be) a place (one can) form a personal bond with nature.” (Hatch) The JY ranch was established in 1906 as one of the first dude ranches in the valley. John D. Rockefeller Jr. purchased the ranch in 1932. In the 1990s 2,000 acres of the ranch’s 3,000 acres were donated to the National Park. “The land represents one of the largest gifts ever given to the National Park System,” (Hatch)

The New Rockefeller Preserve contains eight miles of trails as well as a Platinum LEED certified interpretive center. “The new interpretive center-the first platinum-level Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building to be

constructed in the National Park System- offers visitors a distinctive opportunity to learn about the natural world while exploring the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve property in Grand Teton National Park.” (Skaggs) The LEED NC- V2.1 Platinum certification was the first LEED certification granted to any project in Wyoming. “The building is a fantastic example of a truly integrated design process and how technical analysis applied early and often will produce high-performance results. It is a model for Wyoming and for the Park Service as a whole.” (Rocky Mountain Institute)

The design of the visitors’ center is meant to “awaken the senses so that visitors gain a heightened appreciation of the surrounding landscape. More like a chapel than a visitors center, the L-shaped, rectilinear order of the building curves to an apse-like form at its south end. Here, vertical wood slats reminiscent of old barns with gaps between boards, bring narrow slits of light into a contemplative space, suggesting the spiritual power of nature.”(Carney Architects) Some noted examples of sustainable elements throughout the hotel are as follows.

- The Preserve uses 76,000 gallons per year less water than typical building of the same size and function through the use of composting toilets and low-flow fixtures.
- Recycled-content materials, including structural steel, cotton-batt insulation, metal roofing, and carpet help minimize the amount of embodied energy in the structure.
- More than 75% of the construction waste was diverted from the landfill, including the waste associated with a massive relocation effort for 30 buildings on the site

- At least 20% of all materials and products used were manufactured within a 500-mile radius of the project site.
- A ground-source heat pump, a 10-kilowatt photovoltaic system, heat mirror windows, a 0,8 watt per square foot lighting power density and occupant lighting controls all contribute to an 84% reduction in regulated building energy costs

### **Concluding Analysis**

All of the patterns from my concluding patterns list were exemplified at the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve in Teton National Park. A Matrix describing each similar characteristic is found at the end of the chapter. The Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve is an exceptional example of how sustainability, if implemented holistically and consciously throughout a project, can connect man to nature. The site might have had an upper hand given the surrounding landscape of a National Park, however much effort was expended from the designers to the management to create a space that followed the intended mission, which was “to inspire appreciation and reverence for the beauty and diversity of the natural world, to demonstrate the importance of protecting the land while providing public access, and to foster individual responsibility for conservation stewardship.” (Rockefeller Preserve interpretive center)

The interpretive center provides sensory exploration varying from a wooden, circular room with sound bytes echoing throughout, to a long nave like area with four video screens, which represent each season. Each sensory display inside the building prepares one for the journey existing outside the building in the landscape. A continuous video is played on each screen showing scenes of the life within the preserve. Sounds of the wilderness are played from speakers above your head creating a feeling of humility

and awe. To better understand the intentions of the designers and the Rockefeller mission I perused their library. Books such as Ian McHarg's *Design with Nature*, Sim Van Der Ryn's *Ecological Design*, *Cradle to Cradle* by William McDonough and Michael Braungart, and Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* lined the shelves. Two boys sat on the couch in the middle of the room and picked up *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, a classic tale of environmental stewardship told in Seuss's whimsical language.

The Rockefeller Preserve is a great model for any development who's intention is to inspire man to create a relationship with nature. The preserve also offers insight into the potential for sustainable development. The vision of Laurance S. Rockefeller is one that can, and should be present in all development. "The trees, the animals, the streams, the flowers, preserves as much as possible in their natural state of beauty, will in turn help preserve our most precious resource-the human spirit." (Laurance S. Rockefeller's remarks at the dedication of the Jackson Lake Lodge, June 12, 1955)

# Sacred Pattern Matrix

Site	Bear Butte	Devils Tower	Medicine Wheel	Katuah Mound	Common patterns
<b>Pattern</b>					<b>ONE</b> <b>TWO</b> <b>THREE</b> <b>FOUR</b>
<b>Cultural</b>					
• Native or Non-native consecration	both	both	both	both	
• Nature as part of ceremony	yes	yes	yes	no	
• Burials	yes	no	no	yes	
• Myth	yes	yes	yes	yes	
• Native involvement with interpretation	yes	yes	yes	yes	
<b>Physical</b>					
• Site Adapted or Site Imposed architecture	adapted	adapted	adapted	adapted	
• Dramatic change in physiography of site	yes	yes	yes	yes	
• Dramatic change in the geology of the site	yes	yes	no	no	
• Dramatic change in vegetation of site	yes	yes	no	no	
• Natural world, sacred objects found on site	yes	no	yes	yes	
• Water	yes	no	no	yes	
• Significant views to other sacred places	yes	yes	yes	yes	
• Sensitive Ecosystem	yes	yes	yes	yes	
• Reclamation	yes	yes	no	yes	
• Journey	yes	yes	yes	yes	
• Christopher Alexander's patterns	yes	yes	yes	yes	
<b>Personal</b>					
• Site Programming experiential allowance scale-rate 1-5	4	2	4	5	
• Revelatory site response	yes	no	yes	no	
• Place character	all but ground	all but ground	all but ground	all	
<b>Vine Deloria's pattern list</b>					
• Historical importance of land	yes	yes	yes	yes	
• Is the site in a secular place	yes	yes	yes	yes	
• Revelation of Higher Powers	yes	no	yes	no	
• Revelatory opportunities	yes	yes	yes	yes	

## Sacred Pattern Similarities

### Site Two: Hotel Terra, Teton Village, Wyoming

• Native or Non-native consecration	Not Exemplified
• Myth	The site is at the base of the Jackson Hole ski hill. Most of the myths revolve around ski legends and snowfall records as well as its close proximity the Teton National Park.
• Site Adapted or Site Imposed architecture	The hotel used materials that represent the aesthetic characteristics of the surrounding landscape.
• Dramatic change in physiographic of site	Not Exemplified
• Significant views to other sacred places	There are significant views toward Sheep Mountain to the east and the Teton Mountain range to the north and south.
• Sensitive Ecosystem	Not Exemplified
• Journey	Each occupant at the hotel set out on a journey and eventually arrived in Jackson. Also, the many available activities such as hiking and skiing lend themselves to many unexpected journeys.
• Historical importance of land	Not Exemplified
• Revelatory opportunities	There are many alcoves throughout the hotel providing more intimate seating areas, as well as a spa located on the roof which provides the opportunity to nurture the body and the soul.
• Is the site in a secular place	Not Exemplified

## Sacred Pattern Similarities

### Site Two: Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve, Teton National Park, Wyoming

• Native or Non-native consecration	The site does not segregate anyone people group from fully experiencing the site. Both Natives to the area and tourists share the same experiences.
• Myth	The myth of the Rockefeller family as well as the natural history of the area is incorporated into the interpretive elements and the site design.
• Site Adapted or Site Imposed architecture	The materials used to construct the site as well as the design of the site represent the surrounding landscape.
• Dramatic change in physiographic of site	Inherently, the landscape in and around the preserve is physiographical different due to the preservation efforts of the Nation Park. All vegetation was kept in a native state as well as much of the disturbed land was reclaimed in the process of development.
• Significant views to other sacred places	There are views of the nearby Teton Peaks, as well as trails to alpine lakes and high alpine meadows.
• Sensitive Ecosystem	The ecosystem within the preserve is sensitive due to the existing native flora, fauna, wetlands, and sagebrush meadows.
• Journey	The Preserve is located away from the main park road in an isolated part of the park. There are a myriad of trails which take you further into isolated portions of the National Park.
• Historical importance of land	The Land has historical importance due to its association with the Rockefeller family as well as the National Park system. There are also historically significant geological periods which have taken place within the preserve.
• Revelatory opportunities	The are a multitude of revelatory opportunities that exist within the preserve. Whether it be the sighting of a Moose and her new calf or hearing the sound of an elk bugle for the first time within the interpretive center.
• Is the site in a secular place	The Preserve exists within Teton National Park, therefore it is a gift to all people outside of any religion. Where some people might view the preserve as spiritual, others might recognize its value within species diversity and animal habitat protection.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

#### A Designers Look Forward

Inevitably, the real hurdle in the success of reconnecting Man to Nature is the human mind. Is it possible for us to turn our habits upside down and begin anew? We are amidst a global call to order, this is no longer a debate whether it is a good idea or not. We must act consciously in order for our children to live a full and healthy life.

The concluding patterns and the sustainability analysis have suggested that in order to design a cohesive site that connects people to Nature we must recognize and maintain place, culture, and sacredness. We must consider programming (language), relationship (within community and Nature), and stewardship (respect and cooperation) to create lasting change in the mind and values of communities. The interconnectedness between both social and natural forces must be considered within our mission statements. The more one experiences and sees Nature and its relation to Man the greater respect one gains.

Aldo Leopold documents his life in accordance with his land's life in his book, *A Sand County Almanac*. Through his conscious being he allows himself to wonder and make connections between time, nature and human actions. It is through his observation of this connection that he gains a greater respect for the land. At one point in his writing, Aldo Leopold contemplates the action of whether or not he should cut down a birch tree or a white pine. He understood that each tree is part of a specific life cycle that affects other species. If we understood the consequences of our actions as affecting other

species through a lifecycle then we might have a greater respect for what is around us in the Natural World. As landscape architects and environmental designers, we are placing our signatures on the land. It is up to us to remain conscious and centered in our ecological foundation and strive for sustainability within each project.

Aldo Leopold has a true and vivid understanding of the inner-workings of his landscape that can only be realized through direct experience on the land; experience that involves each scent and season. When I set out on this journey I was not seeking purification, spiritual renewal or revelation. I was simply trying to conduct non- biased research on found characteristics of the sacred; however, throughout this journey Nature has guided me and shown me that patience is inevitable. And at times to sit and observe is doing and experiencing. There is the potential to find revelation in each journey. It is however up to us whether or not we desire to be conscious of it or not. We must transform our minds as well as our hearts and allow ourselves to be vulnerable if we are to experience the sacred and grow.

#### Future Research Opportunities

The similarities of my concluding sacred patterns list and the current sustainability movement suggests that some of the themes previously suggested are currently in practice. However, I feel that this is one area that can expanded with further research. Additional sustainable sites can be analyzed to better understand how current sustainability practices take into consideration mans relationship to nature. There is also the potential to compare sacred patterns to the Sustainable Sites criteria once it is finalized and published. Also, additional sources of sacred patterns, as well as additional

Native American sacred sites can be added to create a more defined concluding patterns list.

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