

## Additional Text: Re-connecting with Cultural Values. G. Saunders

### **Slide 4**

There is a personal cultural context for our engagement with nature. That effects and determines how we relate to nature in our lives, and how we respond to its plight.

There is a collective - tribal - cultural prism through which we view nature, and which affects our ability to communicate with one another about what we see.

### **Slide 6**

There has been a debate for some time in the pages of Ecos and the message board of VINE about the whole issue of soul in nature conservation, and whether we are risking losing ours.

We are probably all familiar with the juxtaposition of the very personal, human aspects of our relationships with nature - -

And what Matthew Oates calls the obfuscation of nature conservation language.

- including the 'B' word itself

### **Slide 7**

Sometimes it is tribal jargon. Sometimes it is sincerely used as a tongue with which to do business with the dead hand of policy-making and government. And in that respect it has served a real purpose. Trouble is, we become deadened by it.

But not only do we risk atrophying our own passion amidst all this plan setting and delivering, but perhaps more importantly we are walling ourselves up from any true communication with People.

### **Slides 11 - 17**

#### **Participation:**

**Manipulative** - Participation is simply a pretence.

**Passive** - People participate by being told what has been decided; info being shared belongs only to external professionals

**By consultation** - People participate by being consulted or by answering questions; process does not concede any share in decision making - no obligation to take on board people's views

**Bought** - Participation in return for cash or other incentives. People have no stake in prolonging the practices once incentives end.

**Functional** - Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve goals, especially reduce costs; people may form groups to meet pre-determined objectives.

**Interactive** - People participate in joint analysis, developing action plans, or forming and strengthening local groups or institutions. Learning methods encourage multiple perspectives, and groups determine how resources are used.

**Self-mobilisation and Self-reliance** - People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems, contacting external bodies for resources and advice, but retaining control over how resources are used

#### **Slide 20**

We must learn not only to restore the physical aspects of habitats, but also the cultural commitment to protect, to heal, and to let the wildness of living communities continue to evolve.

We must learn to listen, as well as to tell.

#### **Slide 21**

Any strategy for conservation which does not invest in local people, so that they may own and determine the way that conservation is done, is living on borrowed time.

It may seem expedient to tell, compel, or feel secure with the support only of a close cabal of colleagues and peers. It may seem - and is - hard work to make participation real. But there is ultimately no short cut to embedding nature in human culture.

And ultimately that process of embedding - sharing the ownership of a strategy - means having the courage to trust people. Give them the knowledge, the confidence, the resources and the inspiration. But then, finally, let them decide the future of their land, for themselves.