



Woods of Woods

Newsletter
of the
Forest Preserve
District
of the Kankakee
River Valley

"All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals, or collectively, the land ... a land ethic changes the role of Homo Sapiens from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it... it implies respect for his fellow members, and so also respect for the community as such."

— Aldo Leopold, "Sand County Almanac"

A Moonless Winter Night Walk

The advertisement for the Forest Preserve Moonlight Walk in the Journal was somewhat misleading. Clouds made the moon go away and made for a dark night. Snow on the ground along with house lights at least made the trail visible. I brought along a flashlight, one of those small pocket kind with LED bulbs. They're inexpensive and easy to carry. The problem was, it didn't work. I fiddled with the end cap switch clicking it on and off until it miraculously lit. Unfortunately, I was looking at it right in front of my face. My night vision suffered for a minute but was reassured the light would work, some of the time anyway.

Off we went into the woods. I heard something. A deep "whooooo, who, whoho... whooo, who". We stopped to listen. It kept up as we got closer then went quiet. The Great Horned Owl is nesting now, the first bird of the season. Males brood the eggs even with snow covering them. Male devotion to its young is quite admirable.

The trail led to the creek where Dutchman's Breeches bloomed last spring, but now only snow and cold. Hard to imagine that now. Tracks in the snow showed deer crossing and skid marks where they slipped on the raised foot path. I was afraid we might encounter a herd on the run and get in the way.

A short distance to the river but I couldn't make it. I had to go. You know. My Mom, who grew up in the woods, said they used to find a downed log to sit on. The cold night air didn't make that option appealing to me, so off we went back to civilization. I made it OK. Later, I wondered if "the good ole days" were really so good after all. I was glad I came though, otherwise, the owl would have hooted, but no one would hear.

John Baxter

*"As to dredging the river in Indiana,
it will be noticed that God never made a straight river,
and I don't think man can improve on his general plans."*

— Edwin Beardsley

Man's heart away from nature becomes hard.

— Standing Bear

YOUR *Kankakee Forest Preserves* Have Grown and Improved

Unfortunately, prior to settlements in Kankakee County, woodlands were very sparse. Man's settlement exacerbated what little woodlands were here. It is all of our duty to maintain and preserve what is remaining.

There are now 7 Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve sites. One brand new one and two have added acreage. We are small by comparison to Will or Cook County but hopefully our future will be a Kankakee County Forest Preserve. There is just not a lot of open space to purchase where we are limited to Kankakee and Aroma Park. Land must be preserved as soon as possible for future generations to enjoy. There are many studies proving the importance of nature in a child's development and also a stress reducer for adults.

Waldron Arboretum is a 90 acre site now with a recent 60 acre addition. There are trees identified to memorialize loved ones through a one mile trail that winds through woods and includes a prairie. It is located approximately one mile south of I-57 on Waldron Road,

Aroma Park

Aroma Land and Water Preserve is a 133 acre site now with a recent 49.5 acre addition and additional 30 acres added in 2008 with the assistance of a C-200 state grant. It is our premier site because of its rare flora and fauna. It is located on Hieland Road 1.4 miles south of HW 17 East in St. Anne. It has walking trails, a sand prairie, wet Oak woodlands, and river frontage.

Zeedyk Meadows is our newest site which was generously donated to us. Four acres of trees and prairie grasses, it is located in St. Anne on Warren Avenue.

Shannon Bayou Environmental Education Center has 46 acres which includes a 0.6 mile walking trail, a prairie, a reforestation project of native trees, river frontage, and a bird sanctuary. The prairie and butterfly garden will be expanded soon. It is located at 3301 Waldron road, Aroma Park.

Gar Creek has 85 acres which includes a prairie, trees, river frontage, a creek and walking trail. It shares part of its walking trail with the Kankakee

County Riverfront Trail. It is located one half mile east of route 45/52 on River Road in Kankakee.

Strasma Grove has just 2 acres nestled in a neighborhood with trees and a walking trail. It was also donated to us and is located on Duane Blvd. in Kankakee.

Limestone Reforestation site (Lemon Grove) has 30 acres of trees. It is located on County Road 3750W 2000N in Limestone Twp.

Our open, natural spaces here in the USA are rapidly being depleted by development and ignorance. There are many studies on the healing power of nature. We are a very small forest preserve compared to other counties (Will or Cook). Wouldn't it be nice if the Forest Preserve District could become countywide? Put down your cell phone, computer and shut off the TV and come out for some powerful stress relief and rejuvenation.

– AJ Ciaccio-Jarvis
(commissioner KRVFPD)

Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.

– John Muir

Bring Back the Barn Owl



**Barn Owl, *Tyto alba*
Photo by Dr. Thomas Barnes,
US Fish & Wildlife Service**

Barn Owls are found throughout the world, and represent one of the most widespread land birds in the world. Before European settlement, Barn Owls were relatively rare in northern United States, but with the clearing of forests, they became a familiar sight in barns and farmlands. Although its wingspan is three feet, the Barn Owl only weighs a pound. Its light weight relative to wing size allows it to fly slowly over fields in search of voles (*microtus spp.*) and other small mammals. Research done by California Fish and Wildlife found that over 50% of its prey were pocket gophers, and suggested that setting up nesting

boxes for the Barn Owl may be a good method for control of pocket gophers in nut and fruit orchards.

Today, the era of the big wooden barns where Barn Owls loved to nest is past; farmers now build metal barns that the barn owl will not use for nesting. In addition, wild areas and hedgerows are being removed, and grasslands and wetlands destroyed, removing habitat for the prey of the Barn Owl. As a result, the Barn Owl is threatened in Illinois.

With the protection of grasslands and wetlands, the population may return to a healthy number. One of the most impor-

(continued on page 4)

tant barn owl conservation strategies is to build and set up nest boxes. The University of Tel Aviv in Israel has one of the most successful barn owl nest box projects in the world. Farms have reported such good results with erecting hundreds of nest boxes around the country that Israel's Ministry of Agriculture has decided to fund and expand the project. In order to bring back the Barn Owl to our region, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources has begun its own Barn Owl Recovery Plan; read about the recovery plan by going to the following website and selecting "Barn Owl Recovery Plan" from the panel on the left of the page:

<http://dnr.state.il.us/ESPB/>

The following links provide more information; the first link includes plans for a barn owl nest box, and a discussion

<http://dnr.state.il.us/ESPB/pdf/brochure22Jun11.pdf>

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu>

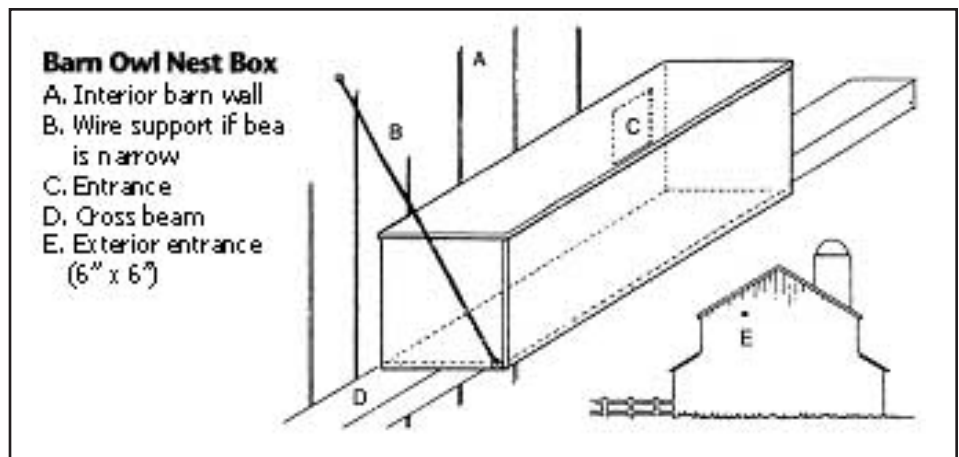
Illinois Raptor Center on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Illinois-Raptor-Center/54956777082>



Barn Owl, *Tyto alba*

Photo by Doug Backlund, South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks



Threatened and Endangered Orchids of Kankakee and Iroquois County

Wild orchids, once found throughout forests and prairies of Illinois, may disappear forever from our landscape due to habitat loss. Threatened species are any species of animal, plant or fungi which are vulnerable to endangerment in the near future. Endangered species are those which may soon become extinct because the remaining population is so low, or because of changing environment or threat from predators.

There are fifty species of native wild orchids in Illinois, and thirty species in the greater Chicago region. Due to habitat loss, orchids are rapidly disappearing from our landscape. At one time, several species were abundant in the region surrounding the Great Lakes; now, not a single species is common and many of our native orchid species are threatened or endangered. The Indiana Dunes region of northern Indi-

ana where steel mills are now located once was home to thousands of Showy Lady's Slipper Orchids.

Competition from aggressive non-native species, poaching and habitat loss by land development have led to the significant drop in orchid populations in the past two hundred years. Most orchids will thrive only in specific habitats that have remained undisturbed and nearly pristine. Orchids need a large community of fungus associates in order to grow. When they are removed from their original habitat, they may struggle along for a few months, but most often will die because their supporting community of fungi has been destroyed. In Illinois, the Lady's Slipper Orchids (and all threatened and endangered species) are protected by law; never pick the flowers or harvest the plants.

See pages 4 & 5 for photos of endangered Orchids

Look at the trees, look at the birds, look at the clouds, look at the stars... and if you have eyes you will be able to see that the whole existence is joyful. Everything is simply happy. Trees are happy for no reason; they are not going to become prime ministers or presidents and they are not going to become rich and they will never have any bank balance. Look at the flowers - for no reason. It is simply unbelievable how happy flowers are.

- Osho

The following photos are from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Plants Database:
<http://plants.usda.gov>



Calopogon tuberosus – Tuberous Grasspink; photo by Jim Stasz @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database (**Illinois endangered**) last seen July 2009



Platanthera ciliaris - Yellow Fringed Orchid; photo by Jeff McMillian @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database (**Illinois endangered**)



Platanthera clavellata – Small Green Wood Orchid; photo by Jim Stasz @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database (**Illinois endangered**)



Palathera flava var. *herbiola* – Tubercled Orchid (Pale Green Orchid); photo by Jim Stasz @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database (**Illinois threatened**)



Platanthera leucophaea - Prairie White Fringed Orchid or Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid; Photo by Mike Redmer, US FWS (**federally threatened; Illinois endangered**)

To learn more, follow this link (select the list of threatened and endangered species from the left panel):

www.dnr.state.il.us/esp/index.htm

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Illinois endangered orchids (as of 1999):

Calopogon oklahomensis - Oklahoma Grass Pink Orchid

Calopogon tuberosus - Grass Pink Orchid

Cypripedium acaule - Moccasin Flower

Cypripedium candidum - White Lady's Slipper



Cypripedium parviflorum var. *makasin* - Small Yellow Lady's Slipper

Cypripedium reginae - Showy Lady's Slipper



Platanthera ciliaris - Yellow (orange) Fringed Orchid

Platanthera clavellata - Wood Orchid

Platanthera flava - Tubercled - Orchid



Hexalectris spicata - Crested Coralroot Orchid

Platanthera leucophaea -
Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid



*Platanthera
psycodes* -
Purple Fringed
Orchid

Illinois threatened orchids:

Cypripedium candidum -
White Lady's Slipper

Platanthera flava var. *herbiola* -
Tuberclad Orchid



*Corallorhiza
maculata* -
Spotted Coral - root
Orchid

Federally threatened orchids:

Platanthera leucophaea Eastern
Prairie Fringed Orchid

Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid:
[http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/
prairie/plantx/pwf_orchidx.htm](http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/pwf_orchidx.htm)

Follow this link for a list of Illinois
threatened and endangered species:
[http://dnr.state.il.us/education/
classrm/biodiversity/PDF/ENDSPEC.
PDF](http://dnr.state.il.us/education/classrm/biodiversity/PDF/ENDSPEC.PDF)

Native North American Orchid
Conservation on Facebook:
[http://www.facebook.com/pages/
Native-North-American-Orchid-
Conservation/149930341692705](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Native-North-American-Orchid-Conservation/149930341692705)

Home Tweet Home

A bird house is a great Winter project for your wildscape

Those who enjoy the companionship of birds will find these bird house plans inexpensive and fun to build. A well-built birdhouse should be durable, rainproof, cool and readily accessible for cleaning. By using some imagination, the builder can also add an attractive touch to the landscape.

The first decision to make when learning how to build a bird house is what material to make it from. Wood is the best building material. Metals other than aluminum should be avoided, for they become extremely hot when exposed to a sweltering sun. Rough slabs with the bark left on make ideal material for rustic-looking houses.

Roofs should be constructed with sufficient pitch to shed water. At least 3 inches of overhang should be allowed to protect the entrance from driving rain. Some water may still seep into the house, therefore a few small holes should be drilled in the floor to allow drainage.

When creating bird house plans, builders should plan for several holes near the top of the box to provide ventilation in hot weather. The house should be constructed with screws for easy

disassembly when cleaning.

Entrance holes should be near the top of the box and proportional to the size of the bird which will use the house. Houses should have the interior walls roughened or grooved to assist the young in climbing to the opening.

Remembering these kinds of details when creating your bird house plans will obviously be worth it to you and the birds! Now that you've learned how to build a bird house, let's talk about placement and construction for individual species.

Bird houses should be placed at locations inaccessible to natural predators. The opening should face away from the prevailing wind, and if possible, the houses should be situated in partial sunlight. Subdued color tones are best, except for those placed in direct sunlight where white is needed to reflect the heat.

Bird houses shouldn't be placed too close together. Some birds insist on territorial rights and conflicts could result in empty bird houses. At least 1/4 acre should be allowed for most houses.

Different species of birds need houses constructed to suit their particular needs.

How to build a bird house: Specifications

Species	Floor of Cavity (inches)	Depth of Cavity	Entrance Above Floor	Diameter Of Entrance	Height Above Ground (ft)
Bluebird	5x5	8	6	1 ½	5-10
Chickadee	4x4	8-10	6-8	1 1/8	6-15
Titmouse	4x4	8-10	6-8	1 ¼	6-15
Nuthatch	4x4	8-10	6-8	1 ¼	12-20
Carolina wren	4x4	6-8	4-6	1 ½	6-10
Crested flycatcher	6x6	8-10	6-8	2	8-20
Flicker	7x7	16-18	14-16	2 ½	6-20
Red-headed woodpecker	6x6	12-15	9-12	2	12-20
Downy woodpecker	4x4	9-12	6-8	1 ¼	6-20
Robin	6x8	8	One or more sides open		6-15
Barn swallow	6x6	6	One or more sides open		8-12
Phoebe	6x6	6	One or more sides open		8-12
Screech owl	8x8	12-15	9-12	3	10-30
Wood duck	10-18	10-24	12-16	4	10-20

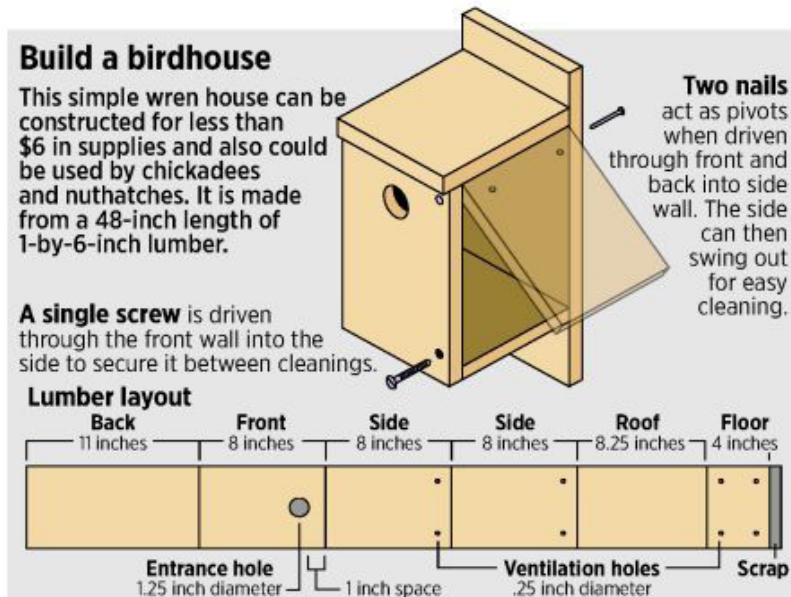
Natural enemies pose the greatest hazard to birds using man-made houses. Iron poles used for mounts or a sheet metal guard encircling trees or wooden poles will help protect birds from cats and squirrels. Houses suspended from wires beyond the jumping range of these predators can be effective.

Ubiquitous English sparrows and starlings can prove exasperating to those seeking to attract native species to bird houses. Only by persistent harassment

can these pests be eliminated. Often sparrows can be trapped inside the houses during the night. But remember: any relaxation of the war against starlings and sparrows will find them re-established. Starlings usually will not inhabit boxes within 10 feet of the ground.

If pests can be eliminated and birds find the house satisfactory, the only requirement remaining is cleaning the interior periodically. So, get busy with your hammer.

How to build a bird house: Basic Plans

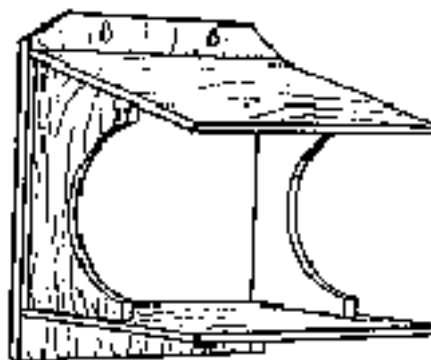


How to build a bird house: Wrens

Wrens find almost any sort of cavity good enough to suit their needs. Boxes of small size with horizontal slots for entrance are best. The slot opening permits this small bird to carry cumbersome nesting material more readily. Any partially sunlit spot agrees with wrens. A supply of small twigs about three inches long will aid in nest building. It may be best to place several houses in the immediate vicinity, for the wren often builds several nests before completing one to its liking.



How to build a bird house: Swallows



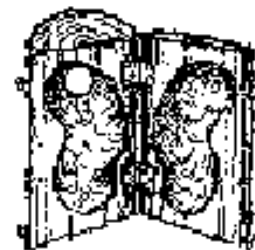
Water near the box will help entice these birds to artificial nests. Open or partially covered nest shelves are best for barn swallows, especially if placed under the sheltering eaves of buildings. Cliff swallows should be provided a narrow shelf under an overhanging roof where they can construct their mud nests.

How to build a bird house: Robins, Catbirds, Thrashers

These birds will use the nesting platform when natural nesting sites are unavailable. The platforms should be placed in partial shade along main branches of trees or under the eaves of a shed or porch roof.

How to build a bird house: Chickadees, Titmice, Nuthatches

These birds seem to prefer rustic homes built to simulate natural abodes. Old orchards and woodland borders are good places for their houses. Chickadees often nest within a few feet of the ground, but nuthatches and titmice prefer higher elevation.



How to build a bird house: Flickers

A rough interior is favored by these birds. A quantity of sawdust, ground cork or small chips should cover the bottom so the birds can shape a cavity for eggs. Boxes should be placed above immediately surrounding foliage. A dead stub makes an excellent support for their boxes.

Thanks to the Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation

FOREST PRESERVE SITES

Shannon Bayou Environmental Education Center and Administrative Office

This 46-acre preserve is located at 3301 Waldron Road in Aroma Park, along the Kankakee River. The Center provides space for programs about natural history, ecology and preservation of open space in the Kankakee River Valley. The walking trail area features plantings of many native trees and plants, including native tallgrass prairie species, and a butterfly garden of native plants. The site includes ¾ mile asphalt and fine gravel walking trail, a picnic shelter, and picnic tables.

Shannon Bayou
3301 Waldron Road
Aroma Park, IL 60910
41°04'47.61N
87°48'44.31"W

Aroma Land and Water Preserve

One of the best sites in the area for woodland wildflowers, this 133 acre site is located on Hieland Road, 1.4 miles south of Highway 17 East. A 1.2 mile walking trail winds through several different types of natural areas, including high quality forest, prairie, and wetland ecosystems. It also has nearly ¼ mile of Kankakee River frontage, and the associated floodplain forest. There is ample parking in the parking lot on Hieland Road, and a playground, maintained by the Kankakee River Valley Park District, for children.

In 2008, the District added a 30-acre piece of property adjacent to the Aroma Land and Water Reserve (Aroma LWR). This area will eventually be seeded back to prairie species indicative of the dry sand prairie found within the current preserve. The Forest Preserve mows a loop trail that branches off the existing 1 ¼ mile trail that meanders through the main body of the Aroma

LWR. In the summer of 2011, 49.5 acres of mixed pine and hardwood forest was added.

Approximately 40 percent of the Aroma Preserve is a wetland and lies within the flood plain of the Kankakee River. In the spring, the wet oak forest gives a spectacular wildflower display while the wetland and sand prairie are the most colorful in the summer.

Aroma Land and Water Preserve
1180 South. Hieland Road
St. Anne, IL 60964
41°06'02.90"N
87°45'24.08"W

Gar Creek Trail and Prairie Restoration

Approximately 85 acres, this site is located about one-half mile east of Route 45 on River Road adjacent to Kankakee Community College. The 16-acre restored tall grass prairie was planted in 1992. A 2.5 mile trail, suitable for hiking, bicycling, and cross country skiing, is a cooperative project with the Kankakee Valley Park District. The trail begins at the prairie, winds along Gar Creek, through oak woodland, and down to the banks of the Kankakee River.

At river's edge, the trail connects with the Kankakee Riverfront Trail Project, which will start at the Aqua Illinois property at Hawkins and Water Streets, go through Shapiro Developmental Center, Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve, Kankakee Community College, and connect with River Road Park and Splash Valley, of the Kankakee Valley Park District.

Gar Creek Prairie
501 River Road
Kankakee, IL 60901
41°05'30.84"N
87°51'32.78"W

Waldron Arboretum

Located 1.1 miles south of I-57, this site was once a landscape nursery. On this 90 acre site there is a fine gravel hiking trail suitable for bicycling and cross country skiing. The trail winds through 30 acres of woods, including a small prairie restoration area.

In the winter of 2008, the District acquired an additional 60 acre parcel which had been primarily in agriculture. Future development plans are pending based on the district's needs and funds available through federal and state grants.

Waldron Arboretum
2755 Waldron Road
Kankakee, IL 60901
41°05'36.28"N
87°49'26.51"W

Strasma Grove

Nestled in a neighborhood on Duane Boulevard in Kankakee, this site is 2 acres of mature native trees.

Strasma Grove
41°06'28.33"N
87°50'43.56"W

Limestone Reforestation Site

This site is a 30 acre preserve and reforestation site on County Road 3750 West.

Limestone
41°08'38.96"N
87°56'51.08"W

Zeedyk Meadows

This is our newest Forest Preserve site, consisting of four acres of trees and grasses.

Zeedyk Meadow
41°06'24.92N
87°44'35.77W



Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve District

1301 Waldron Road • P.O. Box 13
Aroma Park, Illinois 60910
815-935-5630

web address: www.krvfpd.org
e-mail: forest@krvfpd.org

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ON TRAIL...

Call Jean Hurre at 815-549-9072 for information on times and dates for current programs at your forest preserve. Spring and summer programs include moonlight hikes, wildflower and native prairie walks, and animal tracking. You can also find our programs advertised in the Daily Journal and WVLI radio, or check out "programs" on our website: <http://www.krvfpd.org>

But when I consider that the nobler animals have been exterminated here - the cougar, panther, lynx, wolverine, wolf, bear, moose, deer, the beaver, the turkey, etc., etc. - I cannot but feel as if I lived in a tamed, and as it were, emasculated country... I listen to a concert in which so many parts are wanting... for instance, thinking that I have here the entire poem, and then, to my chagrin, I hear that it is but an imperfect copy that I possess and have read, that my ancestors have torn out many of the first leaves and grandest passages.

- *Henry David Thoreau, Journal, 1856*

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