





March 31: Perspectives and Methodologies

- Understand scientific method and Indigenous perspective on prairie knowledge
- Consider humans' relationship with the Land in N. America
- Establish a forward-thinking mindset, with an honest vision of the past and present

Agenda:

13:30-13:40 Locate ourselves (Charlee, Lydia, Rissa)

13:40-13:45 Scientific method perspective on people & Land - Lydia

13:45-14:00 A non-Abrahamic perspective (spiritual philosophy) on people & Land - Charlee

14:00-14:05 People are part of the ecosystem - Lydia


14:05-14:20 Lyla June TED talk

14:20-14:30+ Questions

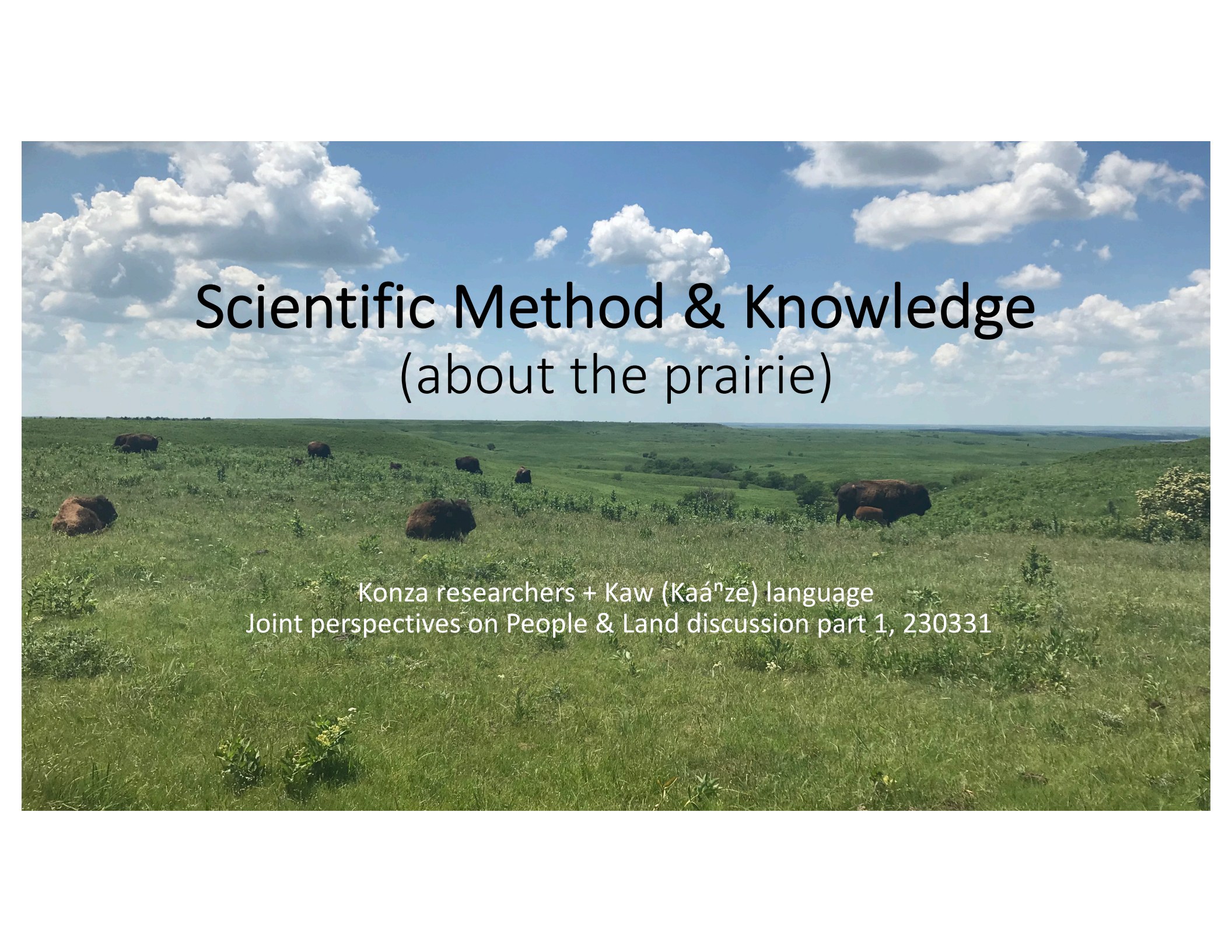
Land and Name Acknowledgement

The grasslands on which Konza Prairie LTER research is focused have been a home to people for thousands of years, including many named and unnamed peoples who lived and hunted here prior to European settlement. Indigenous people of the Kaw (Kanza) Nation inhabited and stewarded this area until their forced removal between 1846 and 1872, when they were relocated to a small reservation in what is now Oklahoma. The depopulated Kaw land was subsequently used to finance the Land-Grant University system under the Morrill Act of 1862, including Kansas State University, which administers the Konza Prairie LTER Program. Our LTER research program operates under a name, “Konza”, that is derived from the name of the Kaw, or “Kaá’ze”, People.

The Konza Prairie LTER acknowledges the immemorial connection of Indigenous peoples with these lands, and we pledge to respect and honor the past and current legacy, cultural history, and knowledge of the Kaw Nation. Through our professional capacity as scientists and educators, we will work to increase our knowledge of the human legacy of these lands, and in turn, will teach this history to others. The beauty of this land inspires our work to understand the tallgrass prairie and support conservation of this ecosystem. However, this inspiration also serves as a reminder of the Indigenous human history that has shaped the modern landscape, and the influence that our current actions will have on the prairie of the future.

A wide-angle photograph of a prairie landscape. In the foreground and middle ground, several bison are scattered across a lush green field. Some are grazing, while others are resting. The terrain is rolling, with gentle hills extending towards the horizon. The sky is a vibrant blue, filled with numerous white, fluffy clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and expansive.

Locating ourselves:
Who are our ancestors, who raised us,
what makes us up (key identities and responsibilities);
why we are doing this work.



Scientific Method & Knowledge (about the prairie)

Konza researchers + Kaw (Kaáⁿze) language
Joint perspectives on People & Land discussion part 1, 230331

What is Science?

Science is a way of knowing through asking and answering questions about the physical and natural universe, based on inquiry and evidence.

We gain scientific knowledge by

background research on the world around us

generalization by making statements that fit our observations

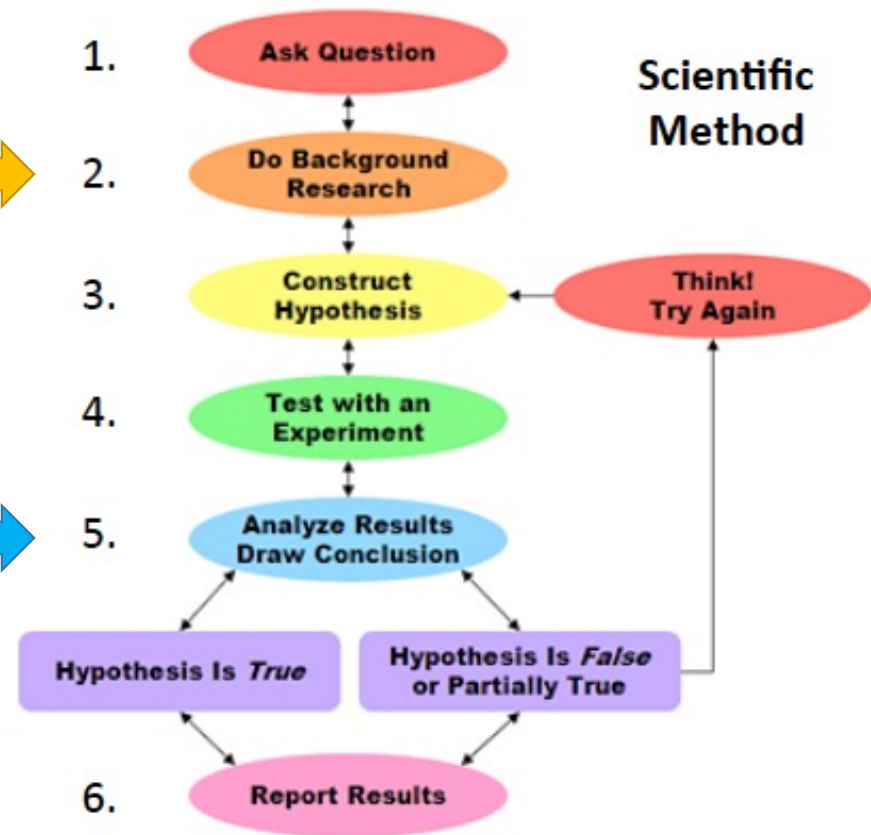
use the statement (hypothesis) to predict other situations or phenomena

collect evidence that supports or refutes our hypothesis

(repeat)

Scientific Method:

a systematic system of inquiry & investigation



Scientific Knowledge

We learn within the confines of what we already know

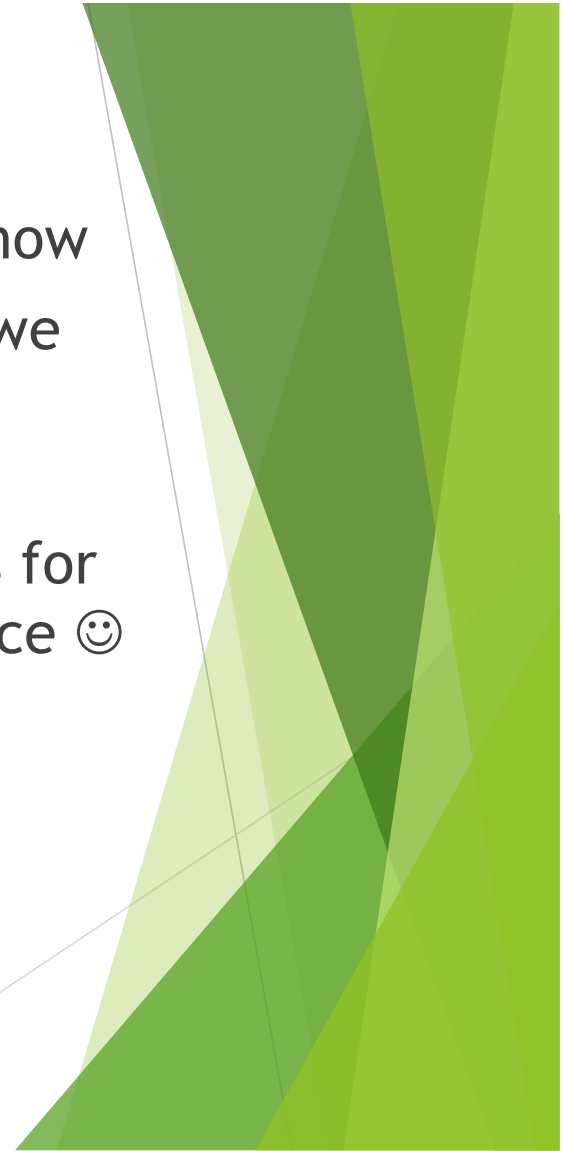
We gain knowledge within the boundaries of what we can measure

i.e. science is inherently *biased*

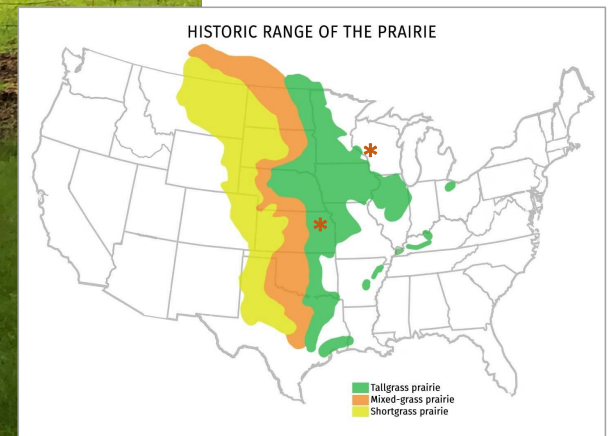
- this is just how it is, must acknowledge bias for best practice 😊

Biases are enhanced by

- Incomplete background research
- Limited measurements
- Personal background: researchers are human



Prairie?

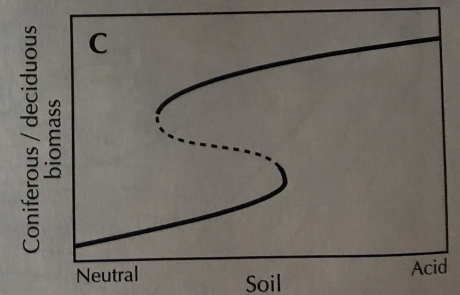
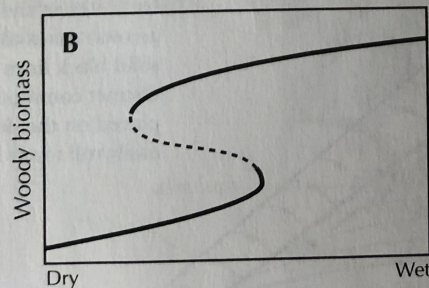
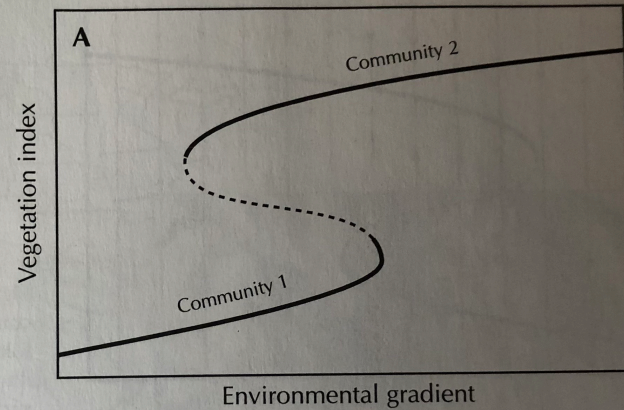


In college,
I learned in
Ecology class

Something
I had
always known!

This predisposed
me to study
Ecology

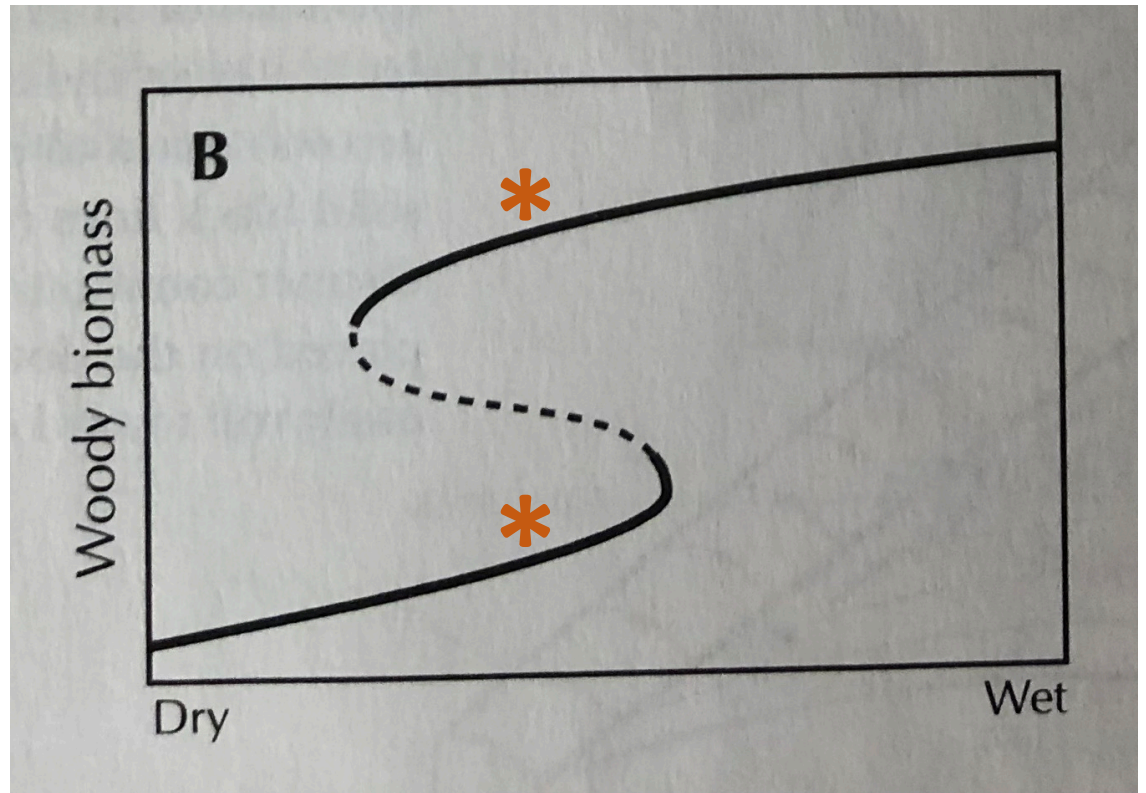
Figure 8.17. A. Surface fold representing two communities over an environmental gradient. B and C. Examples of index values comparing the two communities and the range of physical environment across which they occur.



Alternative stable state concept

based on measurements of precipitation and vegetation

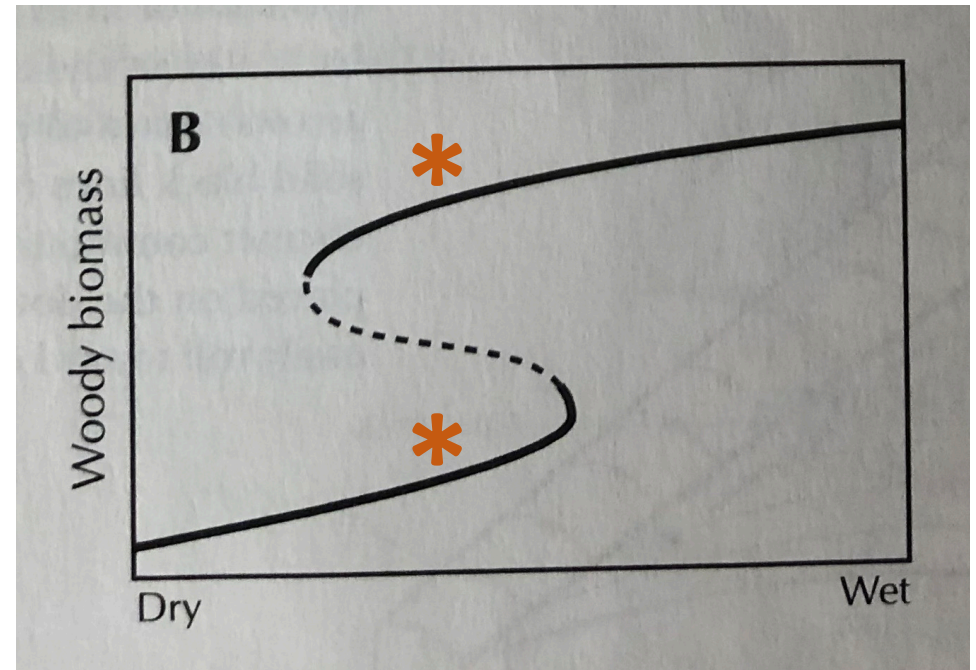
does it hold for other organisms, environmental gradients?



Background knowledge:
Something already known?

What if the scientists
had asked us locals?

We may have also told them
to ask the Native Americans, who used the fire



Scientific *Discovery*...

We learn within the confines of what we already know

We explore & discover what we didn't know before -
but maybe somebody else knows...

“Discovery” of New Worlds
(and the natural history of those worlds)

Based on papal decree “Doctrine of Discovery”
which gave Europeans free conscience to
settle and study the Americas...



Christopher Columbus



Alexander Von Humboldt



GÉOGRAPHIE DES PLANTES ÉQUINOXIALES.

Tableau physique des Andes et Pays voisins
Dressé d'après des Observations & des Mesures prises sur les lieux depuis le 10^e degré de latitude boréale jusqu'au 10^e de latitude australe en 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802 et 1803.

ALEXANDRE DE HUMBOLDT ET AIME BONPLAND.

Reproduit avec l'autorisation de la Direction de la Bibliothèque de la Ville de Paris.

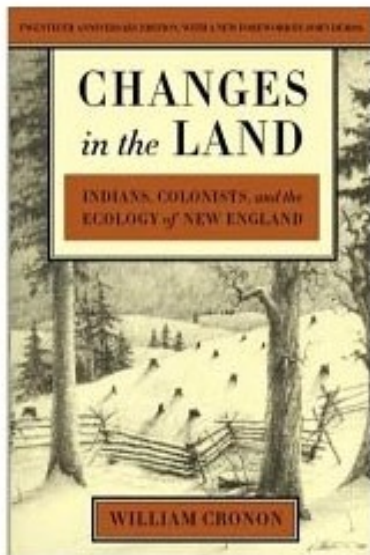
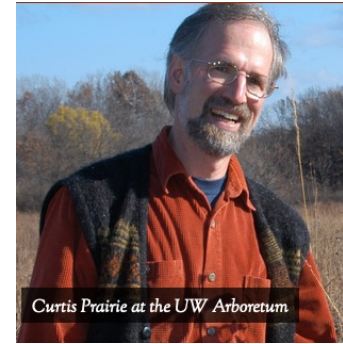
People are part of the ecosystem

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Environmental History 101

William Cronon (professor emeritus at UW Madison)

<http://www.williamcronon.net/>



Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England

(New York: Hill & Wang, 1983; 20th anniversary edition, 2003)

Francis Parkman Prize for 1984

Society of Colonial Wars 1984 Citation of Honour

Valley Forge Honor Certificate for 1984

THESIS: What colonists in New England perceived as “virgin wilderness” was in fact inhabited and cultivated by Indigenous peoples



"Among the Sierra Nevada, California" by Albert Bierstadt 1868

The Trouble with Wilderness

or,

Getting Back to the Wrong Nature

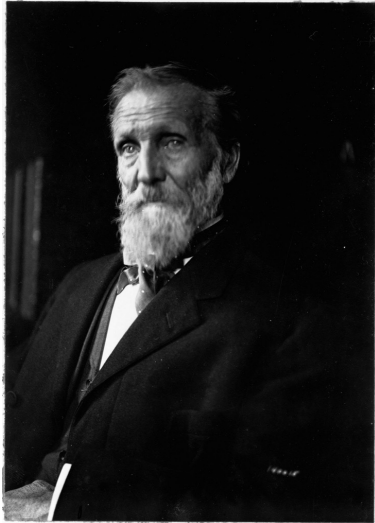
Excerpted from *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, edited by William Cronon.
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THE TIME HAS COME TO RETHINK WILDERNESS.

This will seem a heretical claim to many environmentalists, since the idea of wilderness has for decades been a fundamental tenet—indeed, a passion—of the environmental movement, especially in the United States. For many Americans wilderness stands as the last remaining place where civilization, that all too human disease, has not fully infected the earth. It is an island in the polluted sea of urban-industrial modernity, the one place we can turn for escape from our own too-muchness. Seen in this way, wilderness presents itself as the best antidote to our human selves, a refuge we must somehow recover if we hope to save the planet. As Henry David Thoreau once famously declared, “In Wildness is the preservation of the World.”¹

But is it? The more one knows of its peculiar history, the more one realizes that wilderness is not quite what it seems. Far from being the one place on earth that stands apart from humanity, it is quite profoundly a human creation—indeed, the creation of very particular human cultures at very particular moments in human history. It is not a pristine sanctuary where the last remnant of an untouched, endangered, but still transcendent nature can for at least a little while longer be encountered without the contaminating taint of civilization. Instead, it is a product of that civilization, and could hardly be contaminated by the very stuff of which it is made. Wilderness hides its unnaturalness behind a mask that is all the more beguiling because it seems so natural. As we gaze into the mirror it holds up for us, we too easily imagine that what we behold is Nature when in fact we see the reflection of our own unexamined longings and desires. For this reason, we mistake ourselves when we suppose that wilderness can be the solution to our culture’s problematic relationships with the nonhuman world, for wilderness is itself no small part of the problem.

Preservation vs. Conservation



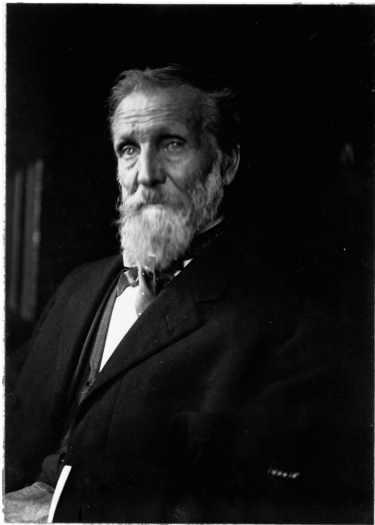
John Muir
preserve
“wilderness”
as we discovered it



Aldo Leopold
conserve natural resources through
responsible harvesting practices



Preservation vs. Conservation



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Robin Wall Kimmerer
reciprocate care for nature
for a sustainable relationship

Time for restoration, reciprocation?

Lyla June

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eH5zJxQETl4>

