



## Wilderness as a Context for Learning

*David Georgi*

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Long before Last Child in the Woods, the effect of wilderness on learning was studied in a doctoral dissertation. While written as an academic project, Wilderness as a Context for Learning, uses history, philosophy, religion, psychology and literature to explore the effect of immersion in nature on human learning. The text addresses universal and timeless themes and often finds humor and irony in its search. The project consists of two main parts. The first describes the historical interrelationship of humankind and nature. It traces the how religions and philosophies were influenced by nature and, in turn, influenced attitudes toward it.

The second part describes a series of studies in which groups of adolescents were led through a set of activities designed to measure their effect on perceptions of life meanings and values. These activities were conducted in regular school settings and then given in the context of several 7-10 day wilderness-backpacking trips. The results demonstrated that immersion in nature (as defined by a wilderness backpack trip) had a significant effect on a number of learning areas.

This project is of interest to anyone seeking to improve understanding of the effect of nature on human consciousness.

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