

tion is healthy and growing. The Rowe Sanctuary near Kearney, Neb. is a good example of how farmers, ranchers, local communities, and conservationists have worked together to enhance and protect sand-

hill crane habitat and, in return, have realized an economic benefit from their investment as thousands of people travel to Nebraska each spring to observe this amazing bird.

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High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Indian Science: Using native wisdom can help save the world

By Janet Sellers

In the 1960s, we didn't know to call it *Indian Science*, but for all my childhood summers, we were willing volunteers and my family helped plant and steward CSA (Citizen Supported Agriculture) nature farms. With the forest as model, we enriched the soil with leaf composting methods. Our Nature Farming CSA group was on a mission to grow food with Mother Nature's wisdom guiding us away from massive chemical use. At age 11, I won a contest for the most hand-picked snails, but farm ducks sure could have helped clear more slugs and snails!

Here in our area, we have a wealth of Native American sacred sites hidden in plain sight. The culturally modified trees and rock forms exemplify the hundreds if not thousands of years of the highly successful stewardship found in traditional Native American wisdom. Efforts in returning to the abundant wisdom of nature are now on the rise worldwide and show success for commercial organic farms, CSA, and home gardens. The wisdom of nature has been creating the planet since it started, and Mother Nature teaches us if we are willing to learn from her.

Organic gardening methods include animal helpers. A family of barn owls can eat as many as 3,000 rodents in one nesting season. Besides their vermin victories, owls are fun to watch using night-vision goggles or a closed-circuit camera nesting box.

Traditional old timey farmers have used barn owls as integrated pest management working with nature for hundreds of years. Foxes, ermine, hawks, eagles, and other animals living in our own backyard, including feral and house cats, also help control the vermin populations. Pheromones in predators' feet inhibit vermin returns, too. But killing vermin with poisons tragically kills our naturally helpful wildlife, poisons our water, pets, and children playing outside, permeates our water and land, and gets into the foods in our gardens. Scary!

[Hip hip] array! Nature and science trivia

1. **Kids help save the world:** Twelve years ago at age 9, Felix Finkbeiner of Germany started his quest to plant a million trees. Today, the group he founded for kids (and other humans), Plant-for-the-planet.org along with the UN's Billion Tree campaign has planted nearly 14 billion trees in more than 130 nations. Global reforestation could capture 25 percent of global annual carbon emissions and create wealth in the Southern Hemisphere.
2. **Trees trigger rain:** A new study by NASA JPL's Carol Rasmussen gives evidence that the southern Amazon rainforest triggers its own rainy season using water vapor from plant leaves, helping explain why deforestation is linked with reduced rainfall.

3. **Green again:** The magical dandelion is a superfood for humans and animals from root to leaf to flower. Dandelions also help recreate safe soils in ruined deforested areas and habitats, and save us from our toxic mistakes such as oil-sands, by hosting symbiotic fungi that eat mining leftovers. The fungi eat these petrochemicals and turn them into a mixture of carbon dioxide and water, and the dandelion can then grow, providing soil restoration as well as food. Weeds as food help biodiverse reforestation, rebuilding soils for the forests that generate rainfall.

Free garden plants

At Monument Community Garden, we're planning a plant exchange this spring. Just plant your seeds and share some plants! Start your seeds indoors now in pots, egg cartons or eggshell halves and let's trade. Windowsill greens and closet flowers favoring darkness for germination are perfect candidates. For details and high altitude, snowy springtime tips, visit my info cache: www.Facebook.com/monumentcommunitygarden.

Janet Sellers is a writer, artist and ethno ecologist posing as a nature-led lazy gardener offering talks and garden workshops for successful gardening in local mountain/forest climes. janetsellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Imagination, freedom, and billion-dollar ducks

By Janet Sellers

Engaging in art at any age offers fun, stimulation, new experiences, and more, because the creative part of us restores and rejuvenates our mind and our body through the pleasant, enjoyable activities that viewing art and making art provide. We meet new people, make new friends through engaging in art and arts events. For most, it can be a fun hobby, and it can be a fun side job as well.

Making art helps connect the whole mind from abstract imagination to tangible works. Inspiring youths to do art—especially outside of school time free of any pressure of grades—serves them lifelong, giving confidence for communication visually in presentations for simple or complex issues and projects.

Saving the planet through the arts

I've been active in conservation through the arts for decades, teaching children and adults alike about wildlife and protecting nature. It is inspiring to learn about wildlife, especially wetlands habitat, which is the barometer of the Earth's health. The arts contribute greatly to conservation in the United States. Billions of dollars are earned, and U.S. wetlands are bought up and protected via sales of the Federal Duck stamps required for hunters and chosen via a wildlife art competition each year.

The Federal Junior Duck Stamp is an American art competition sponsored by the U.S. government for students to draw or paint a duck realistically. The national winner's design is used to create a stamp that is sold to raise funds for environmental education. The Junior Duck Stamp design contest opens up learning activities linked to biological sciences, visual and language arts, and math. Educating young people and encouraging stewardship at the local level are critical steps toward achieving widespread waterfowl and wetland conservation and restoration.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says in its prospectus, "North America's fish and wildlife belong to all of us, and we rely on state, tribal, and federal agencies to watch over them. In North America, fish and wildlife are part of the public trust. This means that it is our responsibility to manage and take care of them and the places where they live."

Our U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is one government agency that manages natural resources, and they rely on us, the public, for involvement and support in turn. The more we understand about our living natural resources, the better we can enjoy and help protect them. Art is a valuable resource for that involvement in terms of education and financial sup-



Above: Art students Ayanna Lawrence, left, and Aaron Lange learn the vital importance of wetlands habitat and the beauty of waterfowl as they practice their art to create entries for the Federal Junior Duck Stamp design contest. The artwork is essentially a term paper with art as the medium of expression to report about protecting wetlands habitat and creatures. The contest is open to students k-12; more information about the contest is available at www.fws.gov. Photos courtesy of Lawrence's and Lange's parents. **Left:** Art student Rocksann Boardman works on her watercolor painting of a local scene of a red fox in February at Southwinds Gallery's Fox Run Art Studio. Learning about wildlife and habitat through art is intriguing and fun for all ages, and offers an in-depth understanding of the complexity and beauty of where we live. Photo by Janet Sellers.

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Photography show

Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts presents the *Visions of Light* photography show, which runs through April 26. Its mission is to challenge photographers to go beyond producing a technically correct photographic image and demonstrate their use and control of light to help define the subject. 304 Highway 105, Palmer Lake.

Janet Sellers is an artist and writer. She teaches drawing and painting to all ages at her local art studios, and her public art sculptures are on view in Colorado cities and parks. Contact her about local art: janetsellers@ocn.me