

A CALL TO BEAUTY

A CALL TO BEAUTY is a Conservation Research Institute project intended to introduce our long-held belief in the importance of the understanding that the experience of “beauty” is essential for the well being of all human beings.

“The human is genetically coded to exist in a world of beauty.”

Father Thomas Berry

We realize the idea of “beauty” is interpreted and experienced in vastly different ways among people(s). Likewise we have observed that the human being seeks the experience “beauty” throughout their lives in their homes, landscapes, music, art, and companions because “beauty” almost universally creates feelings of pleasure and a lifting of the mind and spirit.

To be clear, our interpretation is our way of communicating and sharing our understanding of the idea that “beauty” is an essential part of humanity’s well-being, gracing us most generously when we are in connection and in appreciation with the gift of creation. We quote Rebecca Steele who had just been traveling by stage coach through a prairie in summer near Chicago, Illinois:

“What a tender benevolent Father have we, to form for us so bright a world! How filled with glory and beauty must that mind have been, who conceived so much loveliness!”

As children today grow up in a world wholly made by man, one that soon rusts and crumbles, their maturing souls are bereft of beauty and the gifts of a land made by a creator who breathed everlasting life into it so long as we love it and care for it.

Truly, it is also through the arts and crafts, lovingly acquitted, within which we find affirm our observation *that which is beautiful is loved and that which is loved is beautiful*.

Our understandings:

- As we have fallen away from our connection to the natural world in this culture, we have also fallen away from our deepest connection to and experience with beauty.
- In letting go of the realization that we are of nature no different than a bird, we have let go of an innate trust in the faithful patterns of the sun, stars, moon, and seasons; the natural beauty that came to us in that trust has been lost to our hearts and souls.
- We may have learned to feed, clothe, and shelter ourselves separated from nature, but in that experience a great unhappiness has set in because we have become dissevered from beauty. This disaffection from beauty signifies a dissipation of love of creation.
- For isn’t it true that once we know we are safe in our shelter and trust that we have food and water to nourish ourselves we turn to a soul-felt hunger that still yearns to experience “beauty” in some way? It is in those moments our eyes lift to the heavens in hopes of seeing the magic of a shooting star or turn west and glory in a sunset. Or we are drawn to sit beside a body of clean water to have our hearts pulled into the rhythm of the ripples and waves. Beauty calls.
- In the end, it is hoped the **CALL TO BEAUTY** project will awaken our awareness to the experience of beauty inherently found in a healthy natural world as we learn to look, see, and experience it. From that awakening arises our awareness and desire to love and take care of our natural areas and to teach to our children the wisdoms embedded in creation, in nature.
- Just as the beauty of natural places must inspire our attention, so things we build must be beautifully crafted and worthy of our love. The touch, if you will, that artists, artisans, and craftspeople bring to the built environment is more often than not something coming from a deep love of what they do and their need to express it. The beauty that is created results in a quality that evokes not only love for the object but the compulsion to care for it.

Our vision for this project is two-fold:

- Firstly, we wish to create ways we as humans can be reawakened to the **CALL TO BEAUTY**. **THE HIDDEN BEAUTY SERIES** represents our first attempt to connect and reawaken through the experience of “beauty”.
- Secondly, we wish to extend and make available the **CALL TO BEAUTY** to all human efforts for all human beings.