

Happy February. **Just a reminder that our Redefining Green meeting is this Thursday Night(February 12th), 7pm at the City of Dublin Service Building, 6555 Shier-Rings Road.**

I watched a pair of Bald Eagles on the Scioto River yesterday. A couple stopped in a truck to comment that they'd watched these birds for two years. I later wondered if it was the same pair spotted last year. How did the couple know? Did they recognize these birds from some marking?

It's interesting to watch connections with animals (and people) form. Many times this happens with recognition. For example, there's a doe that passes through the field behind my house. She has a limp and therefore I call her Limpy. I watch for her and worry about her in inclement weather. There are several other does, but I've not taken the time to see the differences between them. If I got to know them I'm sure I'd have thoughts and feelings about each.

There's also a groundhog that lives on a mound of dirt in the same field. I watched it all last year and I'm anticipating seeing it this spring. I've taken its photograph and have shared evenings with it, staring, surveying, and watching the happenings around the field. I always felt as if we shared the sunsets. Perhaps my woodchuck friend doesn't feel the same. All I know is that I recognize this animal and share space and time with it, feeling connected.

Over the last couple of months, I've seen a grey squirrel at the recreation center. This squirrel caught my attention because it's missing part of its tail. Again, I've come to recognize it and I get a bit excited when I see it. The squirrel has taught me a few things. Firstly, because of the short length, the way the tail moves is very pronounced. Long tails don't show the small adjustments squirrels are constantly making to stay balanced on small branches. It's wonderful to watch the twitching as the squirrel makes minor adjustments to stay poised. It reminds me of being young and walking an imaginary tight rope, arms stretched out, adjusting to help me walk my invisible line. At times, a small misplaced foot would send my arms twittering to compensate and keep me from falling. This is exactly what the squirrel is doing with its tail. Of course, there are other purposes for tails. They keep animals warm on cold days, grasp like another hand, and help animals communicate either through shape, movement or wafting smells.

Secondly, the squirrel reminds me that time with nature and recognizing, or becoming familiar with something, is what allows me to appreciate it. I don't have to have a name; I can just sit with it and recognize and enjoy. Limpy, the squirrel, and the woodchuck have all become important because I took the time to slow down and recognize the uniqueness of the individual. I plan on doing more of this.