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Posted on April 11, 2012 by Jack Payne

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"I was just thinking that of all the trails in this life, there are some that matter most. It is the trail of a true human being. I think you are on this trail, and it is good to see."

-Kicking Bird in *Dances with Wolves*

My wife, Renee, will tell you that I have watched *Dances with Wolves*, the 1990 impressive western film directed by and starring Kevin Costner, a "bazillion" times. Actually, I only watch it when I happen upon it while channel surfing, but I always seem to get hooked. In case you missed it or forgot, it is the story of a Union Army Lieutenant, named John Dunbar, who is traveling the American frontier to find a military post and encounters a group of Lakota Indians. Along the way, he and a lone wolf do an interesting dance of wills.

Each time I watch *Dances with Wolves* I marvel at how Dunbar is humanized first by the wolf, and then, by his growing understanding of the Lakota. Dunbar experiences the wolf in a new way, challenging the view that the wolf is an indiscriminate killer. As with his increasingly personal experiences with the Lakota, Dunbar finds clarity about universal values, including living in harmony with the natural world.

Sometimes I think that we are too comfortable just accepting what the majority may be thinking and too distant from our gut feelings. As with Dunbar's friendship with the Lakota, perhaps we should allow ourselves the curiosity to overcome fear and learn to listen to and trust in our inherent human nature despite what we have been taught to think and feel.

So I continue to watch *Dances with Wolves* because it reassures me that there's hope for our chances to assimilate change on the basis of our innate human nature.

-Jack

150th Anniversary

Learn more about the national celebration by viewing the kick-off video.

New EREC Director

Rob Gilbert named director of UF Everglades REC

4-H Day at the Capitol

4-H Day at the Capitol
February 28, 2012

IFAS in the News

King of the Dung Hill
– New York Times

calling... let us go.

From Spell of the Yukon
and Other Verses
By Robert William Service



Most Effective Ag Messages

PIE Center research looks at agricultural messages that pack the most punch for consumers. [Read more...](#)

Land Spreading Out, but Not So Far and Wide – New York Times



Tangerine Research

UF researchers are pinpointing the compounds that make tangerines taste and smell the way they do. [Read more...](#)



New UF Virtual Lawn Tool

Homeowners can now test water-saving lawn irrigation systems by using a free web application. [Read more...](#)



Plant-based Nanotechnology

UF researchers have developed plant-based technology that could reduce America's dependence on foreign oil and may also help treat cancer. [Read more...](#)

IFAS Excellence

UF/IFAS ABE dept. ranked 3rd best by U.S. News & World Reports

Two UF/IFAS faculty elected 2012 AAAS Fellows

Gamma Sigma Delta inducts 41 new members

IFAS Events

Spring 2012 Commencement Schedule

From Stem to Stern II

MREC Research Update & Field Day

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