

## **Sense of Place for the Forester**

by Ross Morgan

November 2001

It seems rather obvious that the place of the forester is in the forest. Now that the location is established, what is the sense of it? The word “sense” in this use deals with the ways the forest affects us personally and professionally; it has to do with the development of foresters’ perception of being responsible for determining what the forest can give to our society. This sense begins with a direct personal relationship with nature, the kind that Ralph Emerson calls all Americans to consider in his writings. Most foresters I know developed this in childhood, and it results in awe for nature. Later it is directed by the knowledge from the sciences in our academic preparation, which introduces the components and dynamics of forest ecosystems, and then the models of silviculture and forest management. It is by practicing silviculture that foresters learn to enter into the forest to take, and do it in a way that disrupts the forests in understandable ways.

From the beginning of the Forest Stewards Guild we have referred to the “spark” that was felt at the first gathering and has been central to our development. The spark is a collective sense of place from all Guild members from British Columbia to Florida, Nova Scotia to New Mexico. It fills our gatherings with awe and responsibility.

© 2007 *Forest Guild* POB 519 Santa Fe, NM 87504 [www.forestguild.org](http://www.forestguild.org) 505-983-8992