



Educational Farm & Nature Preserve

## Legacy Series

An ongoing series of articles recounting the history of the Stratford Ecological Center and the Warner family

### Legacy Series: Part 8 September, 2011

#### *Continuing with the story of Gale Warner*



Gale Warner

#### Gale's College Years

Gale entered Stanford University in Sept. 1978 as a biological science major with a research focus. She soon realized that field research was not for her, and concentrated on honing her writing and photography skills; as always, her main subjects were nature-related. The topic of her senior honors thesis was the evolution of thinking that shaped the "new" environmental ethic in the United States (Aldo Leopold was a prime example). Stanford mentors included Paul and Anne Ehrlich (The Population Bomb), and David Brower (former Sierra Club director).

While at Stanford, Gale spent summer vacations in wilderness areas or National Parks. She cleared trails in the Rockies, and spent one summer managing the Sierra Club's LeConte Memorial Lodge in Yosemite, where she and a friend were in charge of the educational programs, and demonstrated rock-climbing techniques. The highlight of that summer was a visit by Ansel Adams, the marvelous nature photographer, who had held her same position at the Lodge six decades earlier!

During the school year, Gale had access to a nature preserve, Jasper Ridge, and spent many hours sitting among the majestic redwoods writing in her journal. She also became a volunteer at an educational farm/wilderness area in Los Altos Hills, called "Hidden Villa." When her parents arrived in Palo Alto for her graduation in June 1982, Gale showed them these two places that were so special to her. The educational farm/wilderness area was especially appealing to her parents: the founders, Frank and Josephine Whitney Duveneck, had overseen the development of unique teaching strategies to help children appreciate where their food and fiber come from, and to reconnect them to the natural world.

*The light bulb came on during that June visit: why couldn't the Warner family do the same thing in Ohio on vacant family-owned farm and forest land in Delaware County?*

In 1983, Gale chose to spend 6 months as an intern at Hidden Villa, living in a small trailer (with the mice) near the creek. It was during this time that she wrote her signature Hidden Villa essay, "The Creek Still Sings." Another visit by her parents convinced them that the Ohio project, using Hidden Villa as a model, was absolutely doable sometime in the future. Would Gale help?



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