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### **Response to J. Stan Rowe 2001. "In search of intelligent life ..."**

## **Conservation of Places Versus Processes**

[Kevin Trimble](#)

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### **ESG International**

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I would like to add to Dr. Rowe's (2001) points. Environmental practitioners working in the field of land use planning are forced to deal with professionals and municipalities that attempt to achieve conservation goals through the management of places. With this approach, they assume that critical bio-physical processes and services are maintained if special places are protected. They fail to realize that ecosystems are more fundamentally a collection of integrated processes relying on specific transfers of energy and nutrients, and that conservation would be better served by examining the requirements of these processes in order to integrate an appropriate mosaic of juxtaposed places and technologies with human settlement. It may be obvious to conclude that a river corridor requires protection to maintain its ecological functions, but less clear is the need to maintain adjacent tableland successional areas while allowing uncontrolled urban expansion on active agricultural land that may be more ecologically "strategic" for regional processes. One "place" (with existing vegetation) takes precedence over another (which may be visually sterile) without consideration of the species or lands carrying out critical transfers of materials through the region. There is clearly a need to re-define the application of ecological sciences in traditional resource management and land use fields.

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## **RESPONSES TO THIS ARTICLE**

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## **LITERATURE CITED**

**Rowe, J. S.** 2001. In search of intelligent life. *Conservation Ecology* 5(2): r3. [online] URL: <http://www.consecol.org/Journal/vol5/iss2/resp3>

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