

Mineral King Revisited

The Mineral King Valley dispute (see Chapter 4) raises a number of ethical issues. Christopher Stone (in the previous reading) worked as an attorney representing the Sierra Club. He argued that the law should give due consideration to the interests of the natural objects that would be disrupted or destroyed in the development plans. Is there a difference between the interests of living beings—animals and plants—and the interests of mountains or rivers? Can such nonliving natural objects be said to have interests?

Suppose the Supreme Court was convinced by Stone's argument and granted trees and natural objects legal standing. What would follow from this decision? Do we have reason to believe that the Sierra Club would be the best guardian of the trees' interests? Would you accept that a lumber company could speak for the trees? Would restoration be an adequate legal remedy to compensate for environmental destruction? Why or why not? Could humans be allowed to sue natural objects? Imagine a farmer who suffers economic loss from wolves killing his livestock. Could the farmer sue the wolves?

Species and Individuals

Not all actions that protect animals protect species, and not all actions aimed at protecting species serve the interests of individual members of that species. For example, to preserve a species it might be necessary to capture, confine (for breeding purposes), and in some cases even kill (for research purposes) individual members of the species. Do we have responsibilities to species that are different from responsibilities to individual animals? Does a species have interests? Explain how Feinberg, Singer, and Regan might evaluate captive breeding programs aimed at preserving endangered species.

There also can be situations in which individual animals are killed to benefit an entire population, as when herds are thinned to combat overpopulation. How might Feinberg, Singer, and Regan evaluate this practice?

In your opinion, do we have different responsibilities to individual animals than we have to their species? If these responsibilities conflict, which should take priority? Are species more important than individual animals?

Two major philosophical issues are *ex* anthropocentric to *no* *lism*. Chapter 6 introduces this chapter examines ecology, holistic ethics such as ecosystems as primary, ethical concern for ecample, predator-prey ethical perspective individual animals, trees, ecosystem or species, summed by most of the previous chapter, with ing things, literally fai

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Ecological holism questions on several l to rethink our underst (metaphysics). What i individual animals or fill? Are physiochemica