

Meine, Curt. “Aldo Leopold.” In *Oxford Encyclopedia of the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology in America*, H. Sloten, ed. (New York, Oxford University Press, 2014).

Leopold, Aldo (1887–1948), conservation scientist, writer, and philosopher. Following graduation from Yale University's Forest School in 1909, Leopold joined the U.S. Forest Service, where he became a leading innovator in soil conservation, range management, recreational planning, game management, and wilderness protection. His field work in these years provided the foundations for understanding landscape-scale ecosystem processes such as fire and soil erosion, leading in turn to new approaches to land management. Concerned by the accelerating fragmentation of the nation's wild lands, he led efforts that in 1924 resulted in the designation of the nation's first wilderness area within the Gila National Forest in New Mexico. After 1928, Leopold devoted himself to the development of wildlife ecology and management as a distinct field, first as an independent researcher (1928–1933), then as professor at the University of Wisconsin (1933–1948). His fundamental contribution in these years was to apply concepts from the science of ecology to the conservation of wildlife populations and habitats. His text *Game Management* (1933) was the first in the field.

Through his many nontechnical writings, including policy statements, editorials, and nature essays, Leopold defined a new approach to conservation, one that sought to blend elements of older utilitarian and preservationist traditions within a broader context of contemporary ecological understanding. He argued that successful conservation involved more than the simple economic goal of perpetual yields of discrete resources and products; rather, conservation ought to promote “the capacity for self-renewal” in “soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively, the land.” Concerned by the accelerated pace of technological change and its impact on biotic diversity and ecological processes, Leopold in the post-war years focused his writing on the ethical aspects of human-nature relationships.

In the final years of his life, Leopold compiled many of his essays into a collection published posthumously as *A Sand County Almanac* (1949). *Sand County* became, along with Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), a basic text for the modern environmental movement. Especially influential was its capstone essay, *The Land Ethic*, in which Leopold argued for an expansion of the sphere of human ethical concern to include the natural world. Leopold's writings have remained influential, providing important foundations for such emerging interdisciplinary fields as environmental history, ecological economics, environmental ethics, restoration ecology, and conservation biology. See also [Conservation Movement](#); [Environmentalism](#); [Forests and Forestry](#); [Muir, John](#).

Susan Flader, *Thinking Like a Mountain: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of an Ecological Attitude toward Deer, Wolves, and Forest*, 1974 (1994).

Curt Meine, *Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work*, 1988 (2010).

Julianne Lutz Newton, *Aldo Leopold's Odyssey*, 2006.

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