

## The Secret Leopold, or Who Really Wrote *A Sand County Almanac*?

“Aldo Leopold was a forester and wildlife ecologist who wrote *A Sand County Almanac*, a collection of essays about the natural world and conservation. The book was published posthumously in 1949. *A Sand County Almanac* went on to become one of the key texts of the environmental movement. Leopold is closely identified with ‘The Land Ethic,’ the final essay in the *Almanac*, in which he argued that people are part of the ‘land community,’ and so bear moral responsibilities that extend beyond the realm of the human to include the non-human parts of that community.”

This would be a fair and accurate answer to the question “Who was Aldo Leopold?” But is it a sufficient answer? To conservationists and historians, at least, the question is increasingly urgent. Leopold defined challenges that remain at the core of conservation thought and practice more than a half-century after his death, even as conservation concerns increasingly overlap other issues in contemporary life. The social, philosophical, political, economic, and cultural demands being made upon Leopold’s legacy are increasing. At the same time, the living memory of Leopold must inevitably fade as direct connections to Leopold slip into the all-welcoming past. Paradoxically, it will become both harder and easier to answer the question: “Who *really* wrote *A Sand County Almanac*?” What we may gain in detachment and critical judgment, we shall lose by having first-hand impressions no longer available to us.

That these concerns are of more than passing importance is plain. We may turn, for example, to the January 1998 issue of the *Journal of Forestry*, the field’s premier professional journal. Its cover featured Aldo Leopold and beckoned with the question: “Has Leopold Supplanted Pinchot?” (i.e., as the guiding philosophical force behind American forestry). The lead article, by a professor of forestry, offered “Another Look at Leopold’s Land Ethic”—a harsh critique of the ideas in

Leopold's famous essay. The first sentence of the article read: "Aldo Leopold's influence is based largely on a brief essay, 20 pages long, that outlines what he calls the 'land ethic.'"<sup>1</sup> The author's argument, and a counter-argument by environmental philosopher and Leopold scholar J. Baird Callicott in the same issue, prompted intense discussion among foresters and others, and led to further rounds of discussion within the journal.<sup>2</sup>

The point here is not to examine the play in this particular volley of critique and response, but to note that our knowledge of Leopold is, and must be, increasingly contingent not on the reality of the living human being, but on the received images and impressions of that reality. Leopold the human being belongs to the ages. Leopold the source and symbol has been and will be shaped according to the ideas, questions, and requirements—and also the fears, blind spots, and prejudices—of subsequent generations.

The above-quoted lead sentence from the *Journal of Forestry* article illustrates how time inevitably narrows the field of impressions of the rich, complex, multi-dimensional reality that is an individual human life. In the case of Aldo Leopold, attention has often focused largely on his writings in *A Sand County Almanac* (or even, as in the above instance, just one essay within the *Almanac*). This focus has profoundly shaped our ways of thinking about Leopold. There is Aldo Leopold, who lived a life, and wrote toward the end of it a memorable book. Then there is "The Author of *A Sand County Almanac*," a figure who for fifty years has been a mirror to our relationship with the natural world, and has borne the burden of our environmental hopes and fears. There is some confusion between the two.

## A Legacy Entire

For readers, reviewers, and scholars, Aldo Leopold displays as many facets as there are perspectives. Consider the variety of fields that can—and do—legitimately claim Leopold as an important figure in their development: forestry, wildlife ecology and management, outdoor recreation, range management, sustainable agriculture, wilderness protection, conservation biology, restoration ecology, environmental history, environmental ethics, environmental law, environmental policy, environmental education, literature.<sup>3</sup> Leopold remains a compelling figure, and *A Sand County Almanac* an irresistible focal point, in part because all these perspectives were tightly integrated in his personality and prose. There are, in a sense, many Leopolds. How, then, do we reconcile these many Leopolds with the singularity of Aldo Leopold as a human being?

We may begin with a brief review of the basic facts of Leopold's life and the wide range of his contributions. For those who know of Leopold purely through *A Sand County Almanac*, the story bears retelling.<sup>4</sup>

Leopold belonged to the first generation of trained American foresters, graduating from Yale University's Forest School in 1909. In a nearly twenty-year career with the U.S. Forest Service, he gained expertise in a wide range of sub-fields, including soil and water conservation, game protection, range and watershed management, and recreational planning. Leopold earned a reputation within the Forest Service as one of its most able and creative leaders, highly regarded for his innovations in forest administration. In the 1920s he spearheaded the movement to protect wildlands under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service, and was largely responsible for designation of the nation's first wilderness area, the Gila, on the

Gila National Forest, in 1924. A decade later, in 1935, he helped to found the Wilderness Society, providing a broad philosophical and professional base for the new organization. Leopold also conducted important field research in forest ecology during his Forest Service years, and in 1924 was appointed assistant director of the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin. He remained in that position for four years.

After leaving the Forest Service in 1928 Leopold devoted himself to game (later wildlife) management as it emerged as a distinct field within conservation. Drawing upon contemporary advances in animal ecology, Leopold provided the field with its first textbook, *Game Management*, published in 1933.<sup>5</sup> He was named the nation's first professor of game management, also in 1933, at the University of Wisconsin. He guided the field through its first important decade, leading it beyond its original mission of perpetuating populations of game animals and integrating it with other conservation fields. In the process he provided foundations for later developments in ecology, sustainable agriculture, and conservation biology.

Leopold was also an early advocate and practitioner of ecological restoration—professionally at the University of Wisconsin's arboretum and other lands, and personally at his farm property in Sauk County, Wisconsin (which the Leopold family acquired in 1935). He was a widely respected communicator, constantly writing and speaking to varied audiences on a wide range of conservation topics. As a teacher he instructed leading professionals as well as hundreds of undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin. He participated actively in dozens of professional societies and conservation organizations at the local, state, national, and even international levels, and was a promi-

nent player in the development of conservation policy throughout his career.

As notable as Leopold's achievements were, all of the foregoing (and much else besides) occurred before he had even begun to contemplate the collection of essays through which the world would come to know him. Leopold's list of professional accomplishments was impressive long before he began work on the manuscript that became *A Sand County Almanac*—before, in fact, the voice of the *Almanac* had matured.

When did that voice first emerge, and how did it find its full expression in the *Almanac*? *A Sand County Almanac* was the product of the last ten years of Leopold's life.<sup>6</sup> Leopold would work some earlier materials into his evolving manuscript, but he began to sound the new tone in his essay-writing only after two hunting trips, in 1936 and 1937, to Mexico's Sierra Madre Occidental. After the first trip, Leopold prepared an essay he called "The Thick-Billed Parrot of Chihuahua," published in the ornithological journal *The Condor* in early 1937 (it would eventually appear in the *Almanac* as "Guacamaja"). Shortly thereafter, Leopold composed "Marshland Elegy," his moody reflection on Wisconsin's cranes and wetlands. *American Forests* published it later in 1937.

These new expressions reflected a new turn in Leopold's work. Increasingly in the late 1930s Leopold found himself teaching and writing toward a non-professional audience. In 1938, he published the first in an ongoing series of popular essays on wildlife conservation for the *Wisconsin Agriculturist and Farmer*, and in 1940 he wrote two more essays about Mexico and the Arizona, "Song of the Gavilan" and "Escudilla."<sup>7</sup> Leopold was not yet thinking about collecting these essays into a book. However, he was encouraged by the positive response of friends and

colleagues and continued to write in this new vein.

The voice of Aldo Leopold in *A Sand County Almanac*, then, was late in its development. It first emerged in the late 1930s, just as Leopold was fully integrating his conservation ideas (a phase culminating in 1939 with publication of his essay “A Biotic View of Land” in the *Journal of Forestry*).<sup>8</sup> The Aldo Leopold that most of the world knows, admires, and criticizes is really the late Leopold, and then only that part of himself that is found in the pages of the *Almanac*. It was of course one of the ironies of Leopold’s life that he would not live to see *A Sand County Almanac* published or to know its influence. Indeed, he would never even know his book by that title, which was assigned posthumously; his name and the book title became paired only after Leopold’s death in April 1948.

### Changing Perspectives on Leopold

What perspectives on Aldo Leopold’s legacy do we inherit? How has public understanding and appreciation of his work changed? Because Leopold’s legacy is still being discovered by environmental professionals and by the general public, and is revisited constantly by those who do know it, the answers to these questions remain dynamic. In retrospect, however, we can identify several general phases in the evolution of Leopold’s public reputation. Those phases, in turn, tell us much about what various audiences have sought out—or neglected—in the record of Leopold’s experience.

#### *Leopold among His Contemporaries*

We can begin by assessing Leopold’s reputation during his own lifetime, or more precisely in the last years of his life, as he was

pulling together the manuscript that became *A Sand County Almanac*. It is useful to distinguish between Leopold’s local and “more-than-local” reputation. Within the state of Wisconsin, and especially at the University of Wisconsin, Aldo Leopold was a recognized figure, though by no means “famous.” He had played a leading role in several important conservation policy initiatives at the state level in the late 1920s. In 1933 he joined the university, assuming a new and experimental Chair of Game Management within the College of Agriculture’s Department of Agricultural Economics. Leopold was not an academic by background, and his field of expertise had not yet gained intellectual definition or professional acceptance. Securing wildlife conservation’s foothold in academe would be one of Leopold’s premier accomplishments in the remaining fifteen years of his life.

For some time, Leopold remained, according to Arthur Hawkins, one of his early graduate students, “suspect.” Hawkins recalled that Leopold was “not part of the academic crowd” and “a real novice” in understanding the social ecology of the university campus.<sup>9</sup> In the words of another student of the time, Frances Hamerstrom, he was “very thoroughly respected by a rather small, select group; in general, he wasn’t even noticed.”<sup>10</sup> By the late 1930s and early 1940s, when Hawkins and Hamerstrom worked most closely with him, Leopold had acquired a large circle of good friends and colleagues within Madison, but continued to lead a relatively quiet academic life.

By contrast, Leopold was very well known and highly regarded among his professional colleagues in conservation around the country. His national reputation had risen steadily over the decades, especially as wildlife management staked out its own territory among the conservation professions in the

1930s. Another student, H. Albert Hochbaum, with whom Leopold collaborated during the early stages of the *Sand County Almanac* manuscript, saw that this wider reputation had to color Leopold's writing. He wrote to Leopold in 1944: "If you will put yourself in perspective, you might realize that within your realm of influence, which is probably larger than you know, Aldo Leopold is considerably more than a person; in fact, he is probably less a person than he is a Standard. . . . Just for fun, then, as you round out this collection of essays, take a sidewise glance at this fellow and decide just how much of him you want to put on paper. . . ." <sup>11</sup>

Of those few who were reading Leopold's draft essays, Hochbaum most deeply appreciated the task of self-reflection and self-expression Leopold had taken on. He may also have had the keenest sense of how others viewed Leopold. In 1947, after attending a conference of wildlife managers, Hochbaum wrote to Leopold, "For a long time the crowd has been more or less following (and sometimes objecting to) the *rules* of wildlife management that you have prescribed. Now they are beginning to follow your *philosophies*, by and large without realizing whence they came. That is progress!" <sup>12</sup> Hochbaum, a pioneer in waterfowl biology who was also a skilled illustrator and writer, saw into dimensions of Leopold's private life and public persona that others missed, and he understood well the larger creative challenge that Leopold had assumed in the *Almanac* essays.

During his lifetime, Leopold's reputation reflected many qualities: his facility with words, the effectiveness of his teaching, the breadth of his conservation philosophy, and especially the degree to which he matched word and thought with deed. His professional impact was far-reaching, especially

within wildlife management and forestry. By the end of his life Leopold was well aware of his professional prominence, and it is fair to say that he was quietly proud of it. At the same time, the older he grew—particularly in the last three years of his life, from the end of World War II until his death—the more he could look back on his accomplishments with a mature and self-confident modesty. He was certainly humbled by his own earlier mistakes. He communicated this most notably and famously in the essay "Thinking Like a Mountain," in which he recounted his role in the extirpation of the wolf from the American Southwest. <sup>13</sup>

Leopold, however, was far from universally admired by his contemporaries. He often found himself caught in thickets of controversy. The most prominent instance of this derived from his role in Wisconsin's "deer wars," the drawn-out and vitriolic battles over the state's deer management policy in the 1940s. Leopold's determined advocacy of herd reduction made his name well known—and oft-blasted—among some portions of Wisconsin's populace (including many hunters, anti-hunters, and resort owners). Leopold neither welcomed nor enjoyed the notoriety. Although decades of front-line conservation battles had thickened his skin, he now felt as viscerally as ever the difference between his view of conservation and that of "that collective person, the public." <sup>14</sup> Out of such controversies came the self-awareness that Leopold expressed only rarely and guardedly, the calm sadness in his observation that "one of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds." <sup>15</sup>

The deer management fight was only one of many instances in which Leopold staked out unpopular or controversial positions. He continued to wage wilderness protection battles up until the end of his life. He did

not hesitate to use his voice directly and forcefully to protect threatened wild lands, to counter indiscriminate wartime incursions into untrammelled country, to slow the post-war juggernaut of dam-building, to restrict what he saw as inappropriate uses of designated wilderness areas. He remained an adamantly active member of the Wilderness Society until his death. The cause of wilderness protection had not yet achieved the wider acceptance that would come with the battle of the early 1950s over the proposed Echo Park dam within Dinosaur National Monument. As America entered the era of post-war economic boom and political paranoia, Leopold occasionally found himself at odds even with old colleagues within the conservation movement over the wilderness issue.

Leopold was known among his peers as a hard-headed critic, though a fair, constructive, and thoughtful one. In the last decade of his life Leopold became increasingly blunt in his view of the direction taken by universities and government agencies. He was notably critical of the trend toward increasing specialization and toward what he called "power science" within the academy. He wrote in 1946, "Science, as now decanted for public consumption, is mainly a race for power. Science has no respect for the land as a community of organisms, no concept of man as a fellow passenger in the odyssey of evolution."<sup>16</sup> Some of Leopold's most forceful prose (published and unpublished) addressed this theme. In many ways, "The Land Ethic" itself was the ultimate expression of his concern.

At the end of Leopold's life, then, his conservation work was well known, widely appreciated, and occasionally contentious, but he himself was little known outside of the professional conservation world. He was one of several voices from within the move-

ment (including especially William Vogt and Fairfield Osborn) that in the immediate post-war years sought to communicate the importance of the science of ecology to a broader public. As the manuscript of *A Sand County Almanac* went to press, however, its author remained "very thoroughly respected by a rather small, select group."

### *Leopold Reaches a Broader Audience*

A second phase in public awareness of Leopold began with the publication of *A Sand County Almanac* and extended roughly to the mid-1960s. This spans the time from the first appearance of *A Sand County Almanac* to its later re-publication as a mass paperback. During these years two essentially opposing trends played out: on the one hand, the level of popular environmental awareness rose dramatically; on the other hand, the traditional conservation fields found themselves internally divided over the fundamental principles that Leopold and others had sought to define.

*A Sand County Almanac* helped to stimulate environmental literacy among the American public; conversely, readership of *A Sand County Almanac* and recognition of Leopold's contributions grew along with that increasing awareness. This mutually reinforcing process can be traced back to the earliest reviews of the book. The book was widely reviewed both locally and nationally, both by readers familiar with Leopold and by those learning of him for the first time. Because of the confluence of events, many reviews served in essence as obituaries of Leopold, as reviewers used the occasion to reflect upon Leopold's legacy. The reviews of the day thus provide a fair portrait of the state of his public persona.

August Derleth, perhaps Wisconsin's best known regional writer, reviewed *A Sand*

*County Almanac* for Madison's *Wisconsin State Journal*. Derleth knew of Leopold's work and was well familiar with the Wisconsin landscapes described in the *Almanac*. Although he and Leopold were not themselves intimates, they shared many acquaintances. Derleth wrote in his review, "All genuine conservationists throughout Wisconsin and the Midwest generally realize that in the death of Aldo Leopold, Wisconsin lost one of its most able men in the field of conservation. Posthumous publication of his book offers ample evidence that his death deprived us *also of an author of no mean merit*. His book is one of those rare volumes to which sensitive and intelligent readers will turn again and again" [emphasis added].<sup>17</sup> Derleth's phrasing is instructive. For most readers, Aldo Leopold would be known first and foremost, and often only, as an author. For Leopold's contemporaries, and especially local contemporaries, Leopold was known primarily as a conservationist.

Many of the national reviews of *A Sand County Almanac* were marked by a similar tone of surprise, delight, and deep respect, although the reviewers knew little if anything of Leopold's professional accomplishments. Lewis Gannett, in the *New York Herald-Tribune*, wrote: "Aldo Leopold died fighting a neighbor's fire in the spring of 1948. I am sorry, for I should like to have known him. I do not recall ever hearing his name until I stumbled on this book; to read it is a deeply satisfying adventure. This was a man who wrote sparsely, out of intense feeling and long experience. You will find here no statistics about erosion, no screaming warnings to 'do something about the soil.' Aldo Leopold was primarily concerned with the importance of feeling something. He himself felt deeply, and his feeling gives a rich texture to this too-short book."<sup>18</sup> Gannett did not know, of course, about

Leopold's years of devoted statistic-taking on erosion, his many forceful pleas for action, his constant emphasis on the vital role of scientific research in conservation. Yet, all that was beside the point. Gannett was quite correct; in *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold *was* "primarily concerned with the importance of feeling something."

It is an important point. New readers from beyond Leopold's personal or professional circles found here something unusual. The tone and style of *A Sand County Almanac* were quite different from that of other prominent conservation books of the time, in particular Vogt's *Road to Survival* and Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet*, both of which were published in 1948. These two prescient books on the state of the global environment were chock-full of statistics and warnings. Their authors read the future, and it was not pretty. Both books gained an immediate, sizable, and influential audience. Leopold shared their profound concern—he in fact knew both Vogt and Osborn and had read Vogt's book in manuscript—but he spoke in subtler tones. Leopold's book sold more modestly but, as it turned out, more steadily. *A Sand County Almanac* continued to gain readers through the 1950s and into the 1960s. By the mid-1960s, some twenty thousand copies had been sold, but mostly among dedicated conservationists and readers of natural history.

The significance of the *Almanac* becomes clearer when viewed in relation to the second general trend in this period: the ambivalence with which many conservation professionals regarded (if they regarded it at all) the path that Leopold and his like-minded colleagues had blazed. Through the 1950s, the professions in a sense left behind Leopold and those who shared his more integrated outlook on conservation challenges and solutions. In "The Land Ethic," Leopold

had expressed concern over the growing division between conservationists who “[regard] the land as soil, and its function as commodity production,” and those who “[regard] the land as a biota, and its function as something broader.”<sup>19</sup> The former were gaining a firm upper hand.

Through the post-war era, the professions and disciplines became increasingly segregated. Engineering solutions replaced more agronomic or naturalistic approaches. “We are remodeling the Alhambra with a steam-shovel,” Leopold lamented in “The Land Ethic,” “and we are proud of our yardage.” Soil conservation, agriculture, forestry, recreational planning, and range, fisheries, and wildlife management bent increasingly toward utilitarian ends, while ecology turned increasingly experimental, quantitative, and model-oriented. As the professions “modernized,” Leopold and his generation came to be seen as important albeit old-fashioned predecessors. The kernel of their legacy—the integration of the natural sciences and humanities in the service of conservation—fell under the heavy tread of the steam-shovels.<sup>20</sup>

### *Leopold and the Environmental Awakening*

That seed, however, would prove hardy. A third phase in public appreciation of Leopold began in the mid-1960s and would last roughly into the mid-1980s. Paperback editions of *A Sand County Almanac*, published in 1966 and 1970, brought Leopold to the very forefront of the incipient environmental movement. Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962), Stewart Udall’s *The Quiet Crisis* (1963), and other books of the period created a growing critical mass of readers as *A Sand County Almanac* reappeared in its more accessible and affordable form.

As the paperback worked its way into the

backpacks and reading lists of the baby boomers, a generation gap began to emerge in perceptions of Leopold and the application of his ideas. On one side were the more senior conservationists, many of whom personally knew and worked with Leopold or his contemporaries. On the other side stood the growing corps of younger environmentalists who knew of Leopold only through the *Almanac* essays. These younger devotees came into their environmental awareness as the landmark legislation of the era—the Wilderness Act (1964), the National Environmental Protection Act (1970), the Clean Air Act (1970), the Clean Water Act (1972), the Endangered Species Act (1973)—redefined the context of the older conservation movement.

Older and younger readers alike would invoke Leopold in support of their causes and adapt him in their approaches, but those causes and approaches did not always jibe. Underlying differences in (to cite just a few examples) the aims of resource management, attitudes toward hunting, appreciation of wilderness, and the role of political activism in solving environmental problems divided these audiences. Importantly, however, Leopold also served as a bridge across the generations. All were reading from the same book, a fact that would prove highly significant in the long run.

### *Leopold and the Re-integration of Conservation*

By the 1980s, another demographic shift began to play out. Within the conservation professions, elders from the post-World War II generation began to approach their retirement years; older baby boomers rose through the professional ranks; and younger baby boomers, trained in the post-Earth Day era, entered those ranks. Meanwhile, non-



professional readers of *A Sand County Almanac* went about their lives in their communities, the paperbacks still residing on their bookshelves, the words still working their quiet influence.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, changes in society, in politics, and in the environment itself cast Leopold's words in new light. Systemic environmental problems—increasingly vitriolic disputes over national forest management policy, groundwater pollution problems due to intensified agricultural practices, climate change, global-scale threats to biological diversity, incessant suburban sprawl, and on down the list of modern conservation dilemmas—demanded more systemic solutions. Such solutions came to be explored under many names, including *ecosystem management*, *conservation biology*, *ecological economics*, *community-based conservation*, and *sustainable agriculture*. New terms—*biodiversity* and *sustainability* prominent among them—were invoked to broaden the conceptual ground on which conservation stood.<sup>21</sup> These responses, while novel in name, often returned for grounding to the fundamentals of integrated conservation, as outlined by Leopold and his contemporaries. As a result, Leopold's intellectual stock continued to rise through the 1980s and 1990s.

As we are still working within this most recent phase, we are unable to read it with clarity. But as the waves of passion in the conservation and environmental movements have swelled and subsided, Leopold's legacy has ridden through them all, and remained robust. Why and how? It has to do in part, of course, with the historic record of his accomplishments and the quality of his writing and thinking. But it has also to do with the welter of forces that keep Leopold relevant, that bring us invariably back to him,

more sober but more ready perhaps to consider the subtleties of his work. These forces might include the following:

- **The fact of continuing environmental degradation, and the need for more integrated responses that are informed by ethics.** For those who see our fragmented approach to landscapes, their biota, and their human communities as a primary cause of environmental degradation, the search for solutions leads back to the integrated view that Leopold articulated finally in "The Land Ethic." Leopold's declaration of the ethical underpinnings of conservation has continued to gain attention and to have substantial impacts on national policy (through, for example, the shift toward ecosystem management in the land management agencies and in many conservation organizations).<sup>22</sup> Leopold regarded the lack of attention from philosophy and religion as "proof that conservation [had] not yet touched [the] foundations of conduct"; the consolidation of environmental ethics and the greening of religion may now be regarded as proof that it has at least begun to touch those foundations.<sup>23</sup>
- **The anti-environmental "wise use" movement.** As forces of opposition to conservation and environmentalism assumed greater power in the 1980s and 1990s, many younger environmentalists were compelled to revisit their roots and to learn (often for the first time) their connections to the older conservation movement. Likewise, more conservative conservationists were also led to examine their political loyalties. Even staunch conservatives began to rethink their priorities when Ronald Reagan named James Watt his Secretary of the Interior. For many in this period, Aldo Leopold stood out as one who did not place his politics before his

conservation commitments. The relationship between political conviction and conservation action has always been complex. In his writing Leopold does not come across as an ideologue, and in life he was not. He has remained a relevant and flexible voice during a period of intense politicization of conservation.

- **The erosion of community.** During these same years many have sensed and tried to define the changes that are transforming our human communities.<sup>24</sup> Somewhere between the shoals of unwarranted nostalgia and uncritical economic optimism lies (we may hope) safe passage, but the route is difficult to discern. Renewed attention to communitarian values is an important part of contemporary social criticism. A parallel expression has emerged from within conservation, emphasizing the need to *re-place* communities, to see them in terms of the biophysical environments in which they are embedded. “Community” was a key word in Leopold’s lexicon, and the “extension” of community that Leopold advocated in “The Land Ethic” has accordingly assumed increased importance.

- **The interdisciplinary imperative.** This pertains particularly to academia, where hyper-specialization and reductionism move on apace, opportunities for “thinking time” shrink, and the selective pressures on success continue to intensify. Such trends tend to overwhelm efforts to maintain connections among the sciences, arts, and letters. Leopold’s characteristic interdisciplinary approach carries authority here. He stands as an example and reminder of a time before the need to specialize was ratcheted up several additional notches, and a greater share of rewards still accrued to those whose training, teaching, and work were broad and diverse.

These forces—and no doubt many others—have allowed Leopold’s readers to see him in a new light, as one who identified tendencies that would increasingly characterize American society and the American landscape through the twentieth century. The implicit messages in Leopold’s essays, spoken amid the bugling of cranes and the songs of wild rivers, have become more explicit. Yet, new readers can still respond to the faith Leopold felt down to his very marrow: that the future of the human enterprise on this (and any other) continent is tied fundamentally, if not always clearly, to the future of our wild co-inhabitants and landscapes.

### A Taxonomy of Responses

Since *A Sand County Almanac* was published, most of its readers have remained unaware of the life that gave it shape, responding not so much to Aldo Leopold the historical personage as to “The Author of *A Sand County Almanac*.” For the general reader, this may be of small consequence; a good book stands on its own, and its quality endures regardless. (Does it matter that we know so little of the author of the Book of Job? That Shakespeare’s life remains opaque to us? We know the author through the words and the story.)

It is the duty, however, of the historian and literary biographer to fill in the facts, to weigh the text against the life, and to provide the book with a sort of narrative *habitat*. Such scrutiny enriches our understanding of the creature itself—robbing it perhaps of some of its immediate mystery, but providing a richer appreciation of its existence. With such perspective, we may see in our prior responses and images a little less of Leopold and a little more of ourselves. What do we see when we reexamine “The Author of *A Sand County Almanac*”?

*Leopold the Prophet*

We encounter first, of course, Leopold the environmental “prophet.” Leopold’s daughter Nina Leopold Bradley, when asked to speak of her father’s conservation philosophy, has sometimes referred to “that poor old land ethic.” It is a great deal to ask one essay, or book, or person, to bear the weight of society’s need to transform its relationship with the natural world. Over the decades, a disproportionate amount of that weight has fallen upon Aldo Leopold.

Among Leopold’s contemporaries were several who recognized the full depth of Leopold’s conservationist critique and first employed the all-but-inevitable tag of “prophet.” Roberts Mann, a Leopold friend and superintendent of the Cook County (Illinois) Forest Preserve District, published an article in 1954 entitled “Aldo Leopold, Priest and Prophet.”<sup>25</sup> Ernie Swift, another friend and colleague who led Wisconsin’s Conservation Department, followed in 1961 with “Aldo Leopold, Wisconsin’s Conservation Prophet.”<sup>26</sup> Historian Roderick Nash, in his classic 1967 book *Wilderness and the American Mind*, called his chapter on Leopold simply “Aldo Leopold, Prophet.”<sup>27</sup> The trope has endured. Wallace Stegner, not one given to hyperbole, regarded *A Sand County Almanac* as “the utterance of an American Isaiah. . . almost a holy book in conservation circles.”<sup>28</sup> *A Sand County Almanac* continues to be referred to regularly as the “Bible” or “scripture” of the environmental movement.

This “prophet” tradition, whether one regards it as appropriate invocation or unnecessary overstatement, is instructive. Aldo Leopold has reflected a strong social need. Any social movement (especially in its emergent phase) requires a prophetic voice to give itself coherence and direction. Mar-

tin Luther King was the pre-eminent prophetic voice of the modern civil rights movement. For complex reasons, there was no equivalent iconic figure in the environmental movement. But environmental reformers could and did look back to find not only Leopold, but John Muir, Henry David Thoreau, and, among contemporaries, Rachel Carson and David Brower, Sigurd Olson and Barry Commoner, Edward Abbey and Gary Snyder. They became the movement’s “prophets.” As conservation itself continued to evolve at the turn of the twenty-first century, Leopold (among these others) continued to fulfill the prophet function.

*Leopold the All-purpose Hero*

One key factor set Leopold apart even within the pantheon of environmental prophets: he coupled the inspiration of his prose, thought, and activism with the authority of his experience. Leopold, unlike the others, wrote from a varied professional background in on-the-ground forestry, range management, wildlife management, wilderness protection, and restoration work. He was a respected figure in each of these fields and could speak to all his professional colleagues in their own languages. And so Leopold served another posthumous function: as an all-around, acceptable and accessible “conservation hero,” able to appeal to a broad range of conservation factions—at least as long as the deeper tensions within conservation lay dormant.

One of the more interesting variations on this image of Leopold involved an unlikely source. The February 18, 1956, edition of the *Saturday Evening Post* featured a realistic sketch of Leopold in a full-page advertisement for the Weyerhaeuser company. The ad depicted Leopold, on bended knee with

a fawn under his protective watch, against a clear-cut mountainside in the background. Aldo Leopold by this time was apparently seen as a reasonable conservationist who could support, as the text of the ad put it, “*true conservation* through the wise use and perpetuation of industrial forest uses” [emphasis in original].<sup>29</sup>

This Leopold-as-conservation-hero motif reflected conservation’s growing mainstream constituency. By 1956 conservation, however vague, fuzzy, and pliable its definition, had become acceptable across a broad demographic spectrum. As long as Leopold represented the kindly and constructive school of *reasonable* conservation, even a major industrial force such as Weyerhaeuser could present his image in one of their prominent advertisements. It could, for the time being, ignore the fact that Leopold was a dedicated activist, a critical scientist, politically involved and often courageous, and not one to shrink from unseemly controversies involving conservation policy.

### *Leopold the Radical Environmentalist*

If Leopold’s work and words had helped to build a broader, more popular, better funded, more respectable, more mainstream environmental movement, it also inspired the counter-response. As environmentalism became more acceptable, it became, in the view of others, more diluted. And so we find another reading of Leopold’s legacy in ascendance: Leopold as radical environmentalist and deep ecologist.

The most prominent example of this “re-deployment” of Leopold came through the actions of the 1980s Earth First! movement. When Dave Foreman, Edward Abbey, and their compatriots launched the movement, they drew heavily upon Leopold in raising

high the bar of compromise in conservation politics. Leopold’s powerful image of the faltering “green fire” in the eyes of the dying wolf of “Thinking Like a Mountain” came to symbolize for this new generation of wilderness activists the loss of the North American wilds. “A militant minority of wilderness-minded citizens,” they read in Leopold’s essay “Wilderness,” “must be on watch throughout the nation and available for action in a pinch.”<sup>30</sup> At the same time, their philosophical standard-bearers in the deep ecology movement could point to “The Land Ethic” as a foundational document.<sup>31</sup>

Of course, counter-responses ensued. Hence the disgruntled forester, who groused in the *Journal of Forestry* that Leopold was merely a “starry eyed. . . pipe-smoking academician.” Another suggested that the pipe held more sinister substances, noting that he [the reader] had “seen nothing that Aldo Leopold had to say that does not make me think that he was anything but the original pot-head.”<sup>32</sup>

What do we learn from Leopold the Deep and Radical Ecologist? He reflected the increasingly polarity within the environmental movement as its influence rose through the 1970s and 1980s. During these years, the ranks of environmental professionals and bureaucrats burgeoned. Prior to that, if one were engaged in environmental work, one was likely an amateur—poorly paid (if paid at all) and engaged primarily out of a sense of public duty. By the mid-1970s, the scene was changing. Membership in the major environmental organizations was on the rise. As paid staffs expanded, professional expertise began to overshadow grassroots activism. Passion was nice, but a master’s degree got you the job and respect. As the environmental professional class grew, however, the grassroots activists, driven by powerful social, political, and

spiritual motives, hardly went away. The result, in a sense, was a splitting of the Leopold legacy. Suited professionals could see Leopold as a sort of master diplomat and spokesman, able to speak to all sides on environmental issues. Activists could see Leopold as a committed and deeply honest radical, whose message provided intellectual armor.

### *Leopold the Naïve Interloper*

This category encompasses an entire suite of images. It refers to the response evoked as Leopold's interdisciplinary influence has come to be felt in fields not his own. This response may be traced in any number of fields; it will suffice here to examine it in philosophy, politics, and conservation itself.

As J. Baird Callicott has pointed out, that Leopold in fact *made* any contribution to philosophy is not a view that all philosophers have shared.<sup>33</sup> Consider the following statements. H. J. McCloskey, an Australian philosopher, suggested that "there is a real problem in attributing a coherent meaning to Leopold's statements, one that exhibits his 'Land Ethic' as representing a major advance in ethics rather than a retrogression to a morality of a kind held by various primitive peoples." Far from an advance in ethics, then, Leopold offered only retrogression. Another regarded Leopold the philosopher as "something of a disaster, and I dread the thought of the student whose concept of philosophy is modeled principally on these extracts from Leopold's writings." Another reviewer saw "The Land Ethic" as "dangerous nonsense."<sup>34</sup> In short, for a few of the more formally trained philosophers, Aldo Leopold's forays in this field are hardly worthy of serious consideration.

How does Leopold fare among politicians and political theorists? Somewhat better, ac-

tually, especially in recent years. Because Leopold's conservation politics defied conventional ideological pigeonholing, those searching for deeper political lessons have found his work in this arena especially instructive.<sup>35</sup> The same maverick quality, however, has also left Leopold open to easy criticism. Such criticism has come, on the one hand, from those who have preferred a more direct political approach to environmental issues. Thus, in 1974, still in the wake of the high wave of the environmental movement, we find an article entitled "The Inadequate Politics of Aldo Leopold." The author found Leopold's politics to be "wholly conventional, some would say naïve. From one point of view the wonder is not that he accomplished so much as a political operator, but that he accomplished so little. . . . One reason for Leopold's frustration was his own inability to face the likelihood that so fundamental a change in people's attitudes as he advocated would involve concomitant changes in the economic system and probably in the political superstructure. Again and again in his writing he seemed on the verge of some sort of ideological breakthrough, but appeared to draw back from the brink of discovery. In the political and administrative sector. . . this inexperienced administrator had little to offer for implementation of his 'land ethic' beyond a very traditional reliance on high-minded moral persuasion."<sup>36</sup>

If some saw Leopold's politics as naïve and inadequate in the highly politicized context of 1970s environmental activism, others would see his approach in a new light as that context continued to change. A decade later, Leopold's biographer (i.e., this author) could receive inquiries from a conservative journal interested in an article on Aldo Leopold, because they felt he was "an environmentalist we could live with." This is not

as surprising as it may seem. Conservatives and libertarians can find much to agree with in "The Land Ethic." A core component of "The Land Ethic" is in fact Leopold's belief that individuals had to assume greater responsibility for the health of the land; that absent such responsibility, governments would inevitably need to step in, and governments simply could not assume or carry out all necessary conservation functions. The editors evidently saw here an opportunity to explore these "conservative" elements of "The Land Ethic."<sup>37</sup>

Aldo Leopold's politics were not naïve. As Susan Flader has shown, Leopold's sense of citizenship and civic responsibility was keen and evolved along with the changing currents in the conservation movement.<sup>38</sup> That we can read his politics as conservative and progressive, naïve and sophisticated, personal and public, again tells us as much about ourselves as it does about Leopold. It says, perhaps, that we have yet to evolve a politics that can respond in a healthy and democratic fashion to complex conservation dilemmas; that we are still struggling to find ways to protect, in Leopold's words, "the public interest in private land"<sup>39</sup>; that we continue to paw among our traditional political ideologies in search of solutions and find it very difficult to imagine where constructive alternatives may lie. For those deeply involved in the struggle to forge new relationships on and with the land and among the people who inhabit it, Leopold's politics, far from being naïve, remain instructive and encouraging. (And, yes, inspiring.)

The Leopold-as-naïve-interloper view has occasionally found currency within the conservation world as well. Many of Leopold's precepts of conservation were beyond the pale in his own day, and many remain so. More specifically, the breadth of perspective he brought to conservation was highly un-

usual, so that those who inhabited one portion of the conservation spectrum could not always appreciate his comprehensive view. (The story is told, for example, of the joke that went around the hallways of Wisconsin's state Conservation Department, about how to spell this word "aesthetic" that the Professor was always using).

Leopold was both a specialist (in several fields) and a generalist. But as the conservation professions specialized further in the years following his death, it became very easy for some to look back and regard Leopold as a dilettante in their increasingly insular fields. Hence, for example, latter day foresters could ignore Leopold's credentials in the field and claim in effect that he wasn't much of a forester after all.

Another "sub-heading" in this particular category involves the problematic (for some) fact that Aldo Leopold was also a life-long hunter. For this, Leopold has received his share of criticism from at least some anti-hunters, activists, and environmental ethicists. Conversely, he has been held high by conscientious hunters as a premier example of the ethically sophisticated and environmentally committed sportsman.

Leopold confronted the chasm in attitudes toward hunting directly and regularly in his own lifetime. The chasm grew only deeper in the years that followed. No less a figure than Rachel Carson, for example, had an outright disdain for the only Leopold, apparently, that she knew: the one of *Round River*, the collection of Leopold's hunting journal entries first published in 1953.<sup>40</sup> Carson's conservation ethic, of course, was more closely aligned with Albert Schweitzer's "reverence for life" philosophy than with a Leopoldian land ethic. *Round River's* portrait of Leopold the hunter was more than she could tolerate. The same response can be found, again, in the recent *Journal of For-*

etry critique, where we find the following lambaste: "Leopold preached the extension of ethics to all fellow members of the land community, and he practiced killing them until the end of his life."<sup>41</sup> Suffice it to say that this critic chose the bluntest of rhetoric to address one of the most sensitive issues in conservation and one of the most complex of human behaviors—one, it is safe to say, that Leopold pondered carefully and consciously on a daily basis for decades.

These dismissals of Leopold by selected philosophers, political activists, and even conservationists again track broad trends in society. In them we can read the impact of increased specialization and politicization in conservation. Divided into areas of special knowledge and special interest, conservation like other fields struggles to find coherent connections between the present and the past, the abstract and the actual, the sciences and the arts, philosophy and practice. By contrast, Leopold's written record reveals a mind at ease with complexity, open to mystery as well as to new data, and resistant to reductive tendencies in both science and politics.

He was, by all but unanimous consent of historical sources, a decent and delightful person to know and to work with, an inspiration to those working in conservation, tolerant of human foibles, and lacking in hidden demons. Ironically, such qualities may account for the challenge some have in "handling" Leopold. Modern readers, accustomed to irony and alienation and sensitive to political subtexts, may find Leopold's personality an increasingly difficult kind to get a hold on. In our contemporary attempts to resolve postmodern dilemmas, we may project them onto Leopold.

Several illustrations may serve to make the point. For years, a portrait of Leopold has hung on the walls of the Department of

Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. The artist chose to depict Leopold with cigarette in hand (an intermittent smoker, he preferred his pipe to cigarettes). Graduate students—if not the genuflectors—have appreciated the humanity in that particular icon. Then there was the survey question in *Sierra* magazine. The editors asked readers to respond to the query, "Can you eat meat and consider yourself an environmentalist?" Among the responses: "Remember: Aldo Leopold ate meat, Adolph Hitler did not."<sup>42</sup> The past calls out to us. . . from the far side of the postmodern minefield.

### *Leopold the Eco-fascist*

More extreme examples of the above may be found on the far fringes. Because Aldo Leopold is a focal point for discussion of environmental ideas and strategies, he is occasionally criticized as an advocate of oppressive social and governmental actions to safeguard the environment. The reasoning is this: Leopold in "The Land Ethic" places the good of the collective, the community, the whole, the ecosystem, above the good of the constituent parts; he, therefore, would have the whole impose its will on the constituent members of that whole. (The irony, of course, is easily lost on many such critics, i.e., that Leopold saw individual responsibility, as articulated in "The Land Ethic," as the only sure antidote to such eventualities).

Many of these criticisms arise out of reasoned consideration of the difficult questions that Leopold's work—indeed, that conservation generally—poses. These arguments, well developed and thoughtful, appear in our academic journals and conference proceedings. So do effective counter-arguments.<sup>43</sup> Not all such exchanges, however, are so rational. One of the strangest, a 1993

letter to the editor of *Iowa State Daily*, criticized the mission of Iowa State University's Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Not content to question the institution, the letter-writer attacked Leopold as "racist," stating that "He believed in the superiority of the Nordic race. He believed that population growth has to be stopped; he rejected the sanctity of life and he scorned human beings so much that he believed the population of a country could be managed like an animal reservation."<sup>44</sup> However bizarre such rantings may seem, they are not to be dismissed lightly. We read into Leopold (however undeserving) not only our hopes and concerns, but our uneasiness and our fears.

There are, no doubt, other "Leopolds" that bear consideration. As the taxonomy fills out, we can begin to identify the several basic tendencies that mark much Leopold commentary and criticism. The most common, noted above, is to assume that Aldo Leopold existed only as "The Author of *A Sand County Almanac*"; that it is unnecessary to take into account other aspects of his conservation career; that the historical and personal context of the *Almanac*, however interesting, is of incidental importance. One may find this view among Leopold's devotees as well as his detractors.

A second common tendency is to divorce Leopold's publications from his practice. Leopold was a man of action as well as words, and the dynamic between these two spheres of his life may be the most significant of his many contributions. He tried to define a workable standard for conservation to follow and work toward. But he also worked toward it himself, and thereby humanized it.

A third common tendency is to read only that part of Leopold with which one feels most comfortable or conversant and to avoid

confronting the entirety of the person, his expertise, and his record. Hence we find the critic who attends only to one of the several disciplines Leopold worked in, or one of the professions he practiced. Evidence of this tendency can be found in many the fields to which Leopold contributed, from wild-life ecology and agriculture to economics and philosophy.

Finally, another common tendency is to consider Leopold's work only up to a certain point in time. Hence, for example, the occasional wildlife manager who will read *Game Management* and appreciate it as the profession's founding volume, while ignoring or slighting the epic progression from *Game Management* (1933) to *A Sand County Almanac* (1949). Again, evidence of this tendency is widely distributed.

Leopold, in short, has been a mirror to our environmental responses. We see in him a succession of reflections over the decades since his death. In the years immediately following World War II, awareness of widespread environmental problems increased, and our fears grew apace. Leopold offered a way of understanding the human dimensions of these problems, and of imagining possible solutions. He cast warnings, as did others of the time, but tempered the warnings with wonder and wry humor, humility and poetry. In one essay after another, he leavened his conservation message not only through his expressions of love for "things natural, wild, and free," but also through his understanding of the human condition and of human shortcomings (including, of course, his own).

As the environmental movement coalesced in the 1960s and early 1970s, many found inspiration in Leopold's words. Leopold recognized clearly the harsh realities of environmental degradation, but provided a positive response to those realities.



In the academic and policy arenas, he showed how the sciences, literature, history, and philosophy not only could be, but *had* to be, brought together to address problems and suggest solutions. He contributed to the foundations upon which new, more integrated environmental policies and programs could be built.

Into the 1970s and 1980s, Leopold's words provided guidance not only for far-reaching policy changes, but in a sense for their complement: a well tempered understanding that conservation problems could not merely be legislated or administered away, but had to be addressed from within—within our selves, communities, cultures, agencies, businesses, organizations, and institutions. A sense of the limits of purely technical or political solutions gained ground. Stated another way, Leopold's land ethic was now read not just as a rationale for short-term technical fixes or policy initiatives, but as a guide to necessary longer-term social and cultural changes.

Finally, it seems of late that readers are responding increasingly to the degree of personal commitment that they find in Leopold. Leopold, although profoundly aware of harsh conservation realities, avoided the mire of despair. One of his most notable character traits was his capacity to face squarely and honestly a difficult conservation dilemma and to address it in a constructive manner despite overwhelming odds. This trait marked his literary endeavors as well, and never more so than in completing "The Land Ethic." Despite serious health problems and other difficult personal circumstances, he found the internal resources to pull together "The Land Ethic" as he completed his collection of essays in the summer of 1947. That strength of character rests between every line of *A Sand County Almanac*.

### Whither Leopold's Legacy?

How will future generations respond to the Leopold legacy? What will they look for there, and what will they find? How will Leopold's work and thought reflect back upon them? Those questions are of course unanswerable, but we may speculate around the fringes.

The various disciplines and professions to which Leopold contributed are still struggling to gain historical self-awareness. Few foresters are taught the history of forestry. Few wildlife managers are taught the history of wildlife management. Ecologists are sometimes taught the history of ecology. Most professionals have a strong curiosity about their professional past, and seek it out, but only recently have more formal opportunities to understand this past arisen. Many still find Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* a better history text than anything they receive through their formal training. Environmental history has emerged to fill in some of these gaps, but we still lack comprehensive treatments of the development of conservation through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This situation, if nothing else, will ensure that attention will continue to focus on Leopold, for the simple reason that his life provides a unique medium through which to address recurring issues, debates, developments, and trends in conservation. His life story will continue to offer critical insights into not only the past, but the future.

An inescapable dilemma will need to be taken into account. As noted above, Leopold's legacy is likely to become even more important with time, even as the immediate connections to that legacy inexorably fade. Conservationists will continue to examine that legacy, but Leopold's insights cannot serve if they are regarded as inert

museum specimens. Leopold's legacy, if it is to remain vital, must be able to grow and evolve, to tolerate dissent, resist dogma, and welcome criticism.

Leopold's legacy already comes with built-in defenses. He was in many ways his own sharpest critic and anticipated many of the forces that might have led to the fossilization of his ideas. Many a critic will yet discover that Leopold was often there first and had already taken his own weakest points into account. Moreover, Leopold was not alone in his prescient views. He was, to borrow his words from "The Land Ethic," part of a "thinking community" that struggled to meet the conservation challenges of its day. We build upon the work, not simply of Leopold, but of a generation whose achievements and frustrations he articulated.

Students of Leopold's work are fortunate to have the testimony of primary sources, many of whom in the year 2000 are still with us. They have as well a generous inheritance of recorded impressions of Aldo Leopold upon which to draw. Alfred Etter, who studied with Leopold, penned in 1948 one of the more sensitive accounts. It appeared as an obituary, and described a day afield with Leopold. Etter's account captured well the enduring personal qualities of Leopold. At the family's shack, wrote Etter, "[Leopold] tried to piece together answers to the questions which Nature so often tempted him to solve. From pads of moss or patches of quack grass he learned a piece of history. From a tangle of ash logs a suggestion of some principle dawned upon him. From a broken pine a brief diagram of the balance of the forces in the environment was devised. Above all, this farm was a place where his children could learn the meaning of life and gain confidence in their ability to investigate small problems and discover things which no one knew."<sup>45</sup>

For those who consult the historic record, this understanding of Leopold's way of thinking and observing and conducting himself offers resistance to distortion. Paul Errington, another contemporary, also spoke to this, again in a 1948 obituary: "Let no one do [Leopold] the disservice of fostering Leopoldian legends or Leopoldian dogmas. Knowing him as I have, I can say that he would not wish these to arise from his having lived. I can imagine his gentle scorn at the thought of anything like elaborate statuary in his memory, while despoliation and wastage of the land and its biota continue as usual."<sup>46</sup>

Readers returning to Leopold will no doubt continue to find their own growth reflected in his words. Not uncommonly, readers who first encountered Leopold through *A Sand County Almanac* in their idealistic youth return years later to its pages to find the earlier inspiration now enriched by more subtle wisdom. For many, Leopold has become the proverbial parent who has "grown *so much wiser* since I was young."

A fine example of this can be found in a 1988 essay published in the *North Dakota Quarterly*. The author, Patrick Nunnally, recalled that he had first read *A Sand County Almanac* in the politically charged 1970s, when he was involved in wilderness protection battles in the southern Appalachians. He later moved to Iowa, where he found himself interacting more regularly with farmers. He also found himself asking what Leopold had to offer under those different circumstances. Nunnally recalls returning to the *Almanac*, only to find a broader appreciation of its value:

[Leopold] establishes a grounding, a framework for conversation, without foreclosing much in the way of intelligent reflection and inquiry. It seems to me that I formerly used

Leopold to end conversations: "This is what Leopold says, and that is the final word." Instead, I look to him now to keep me focused and to keep me reminded of the larger conversation and stakes of which individual land protection discussions are a part. His principles provide a steady foundation that guides my discussions with individual farmers about the possibilities for conservation tillage and that grounds abstract philosophizing about the need to overthrow the Western world view for an ecologically-just society. He still has value as a source for quotations—he writes better on this subject than nearly anyone else who has tried, and his particular phrases ring better than any of my own. But it is more important to me now that he provides exemplary inquiry to complicated problems, with more than one viable position but only one best position. What formerly I cited as received dogma, now, I hope, I can use as wisdom of a thinker who has preceded me in the land conservation debate.<sup>47</sup>

This is the more measured and better-balanced view of Leopold that we can anticipate and work toward. Finally, five decades after Leopold's death, we may appreciate his continuing influence without having to make him over into a deity or a devil, a hero or a threat, without having to regard him as naïve, radical, old-fashioned, or prophetic. This is the kind of critical attitude that pays due honor to Leopold by reflecting not merely our desires or our fears, but our *growth*.

## Notes

1. Boris Zeide, "Another Look at Leopold's 'Land Ethic,'" *Journal of Forestry* 96,1 (January 1998), 13-19.
2. J. Baird Callicott, "A Critical Examination of 'Another Look at Leopold's 'Land Ethic,'" *Journal of Forestry* 96, 1 (January 1998), 20-26. The April 1998 issue of the *Journal of Forestry* featured eight further commentaries. These articles were reprinted by the Society for American Foresters in a Forestry Forum publication, *The Land Ethic: Meeting Human Needs for the Land and Its Resources* (Bethesda, Md.: SAF, 1998).
3. For a compilation of Leopold's writings, with commentary, in these diverse fields, see Curt Meine and Richard L. Knight, *The Essential Aldo Leopold: Quotations and Commentaries* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999).
4. For biographical treatments of Leopold, see Susan L. Flader, *Thinking Like a Mountain: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of an Ecological Attitude Toward Deer, Mountains, and Forests* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974; reprinted by the University of Wisconsin Press, 1994); Curt Meine, *Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Marybeth Lorbiecki, *Aldo Leopold: A Fierce Green Fire* (Helena and Billings, Mont.: Falcon Publishing Co., 1996).
5. Aldo Leopold, *Game Management* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933; reprinted by the University of Wisconsin Press, 1986).
6. See Dennis Ribbens, "The Making of *A Sand County Almanac*," pp. 91-109 in J. Baird Callicott, ed., *Companion to A Sand County Almanac: Interpretive & Critical Essays* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); Curt Meine, "Moving Mountains: Aldo Leopold & *A Sand County Almanac*," *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 26:4 (1998), 697-706.
7. Aldo Leopold, "The Thick-billed Parrot in Chihuahua," *The Condor* 39:1 (January-February 1937), 9-10; Leopold, "Marshland Elegy," *American Forests* 43:10 (October 1937), 472-474; Leopold, "Song of the Gavilan," *Journal of Wildlife Management* 4:3 (July 1940), 329-332; Leopold, "Escudilla," *American Forests* 46:12 (December 1940), 539-540. The *Wisconsin Agriculturist and Farmer* essays can be found in J. Baird Callicott and Eric T. Freyfogle, eds., *For the*

- Health of the Land: Previously Unpublished Essays and Other Writings* (Washington, D.C. and Covelo, Calif.: Island Press, 1999).
8. Aldo Leopold, "A Biotic View of Land," *Journal of Forestry* 37:9 (September 1939), 727-730; pp. 266-273 in Susan L. Flader and J. Baird Callicott, eds. *The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays by Aldo Leopold* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).
  9. Arthur Hawkins, interview with author, 4 December 1999.
  10. Frances Hamerstrom, quoted in Meine, *Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work*, 378. The most extensive first-person account of Aldo Leopold's activities and interests during his later Wisconsin years is Robert E. McCabe, *Aldo Leopold: The Professor* (Madison, Wisc.: Rusty Rock Press, 1987).
  11. H. Albert Hochbaum, quoted in Meine, *Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work*, 456-457.
  12. H. Albert Hochbaum, quoted in Meine, *Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work*, 511.
  13. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 129-133.
  14. Aldo Leopold, "Adventures of a Conservation Commissioner," pp. 149-154 in Flader and Callicott.
  15. Aldo Leopold, *Round River: From the Journals of Aldo Leopold* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 165.
  16. Leopold, "On a Monument to the Passenger Pigeon," pp. 3-5 in *Silent Wings* (Madison, Wisc.: Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, 11 May 1947).
  17. August Derleth, "Of Aldo Leopold," *Capital Times* (Wisc.), 5 November 1949.
  18. Lewis Gannett, "Books and Things," *New York Herald Tribune*, 27 October 1949.
  19. Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 221.
  20. Curt Meine, "The Oldest Task in Human History," pp. 7-35 in Richard L. Knight and Sarah F. Bates, eds., *A New Century for Natural Resources Management* (Washington D.C. and Covelo Calif.: Island Press, 1995). Leopold's reference to Alhambra may be found in *A Sand County Almanac*, 225.
  21. Curt Meine, "Conservation Biology and Sustainable Societies: A Historical Perspective," pp. 35-61 in Max Oelschlaeger, ed., *After Earth Day: Continuing the Conservation Effort* (Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press, 1992).
  22. See Richard L. Knight and Peter B. Landres, *Stewardship Across Boundaries* (Washington D.C. and Covelo Calif.: Island Press, 1998); Eric T. Freyfogle, *Bounded People, Boundless Lands: Envisioning a New Land Ethic* (Washington D.C. and Covelo Calif.: Island Press, 1998).
  23. Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 210.
  24. See Daniel Kemmis, *Community and the Politics of Place* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990); Wes Jackson, *Becoming Native to This Place* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994); Ted Bernard and Jora Young, *The Ecology of Hope: Communities Collaborate for Sustainability* (Gabriola Island, B.C. and East Haven, Conn.: New Society Publishers, 1997); William Vitek and Wes Jackson, eds., *Rooted in the Land: Essays on Community and Place* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).
  25. Roberts Mann, "Aldo Leopold: Priest and Prophet," *American Forests* 74, 2 (February 1954), 23, 42-43.
  26. Ernest Swift, "Aldo Leopold: Wisconsin's Conservation Prophet," *Wisconsin Tales and Trails* 2,3 (Fall 1961), 2-5.
  27. Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982; original edition 1967), 182-199.
  28. Wallace Stegner, "Living on Our Principal," *Wilderness* 48, 168 (Spring 1985), 5-21. Reprinted as "The Legacy of Aldo Leopold," pp. 233-245 in Callicott, *Companion to A Sand County Almanac*.
  29. "Making Forestlands Serve America Better Through Good Management," *Saturday Evening Post*, 18 February 1956.
  30. Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 200.
  31. In the extensive literature of deep ecology, see,

- for example: Bill Devall and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1985); Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-warrior* (New York: Harmony Books, 1991); and Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991). See also Susan Zakin, *Coyotes and Town Dogs: Earth First! and the Environmental Movement* (New York: Viking Press, 1993).
32. Letters to the editor in the *Journal of Forestry* 88,2 (February 1990), 4; and *Journal of Forestry* 89,9 (September 1991), 5.
33. J. Baird Callicott, "The Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic," pp. 75-99 in *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989).
34. Quoted in Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic*, 75-76, 279 n. 4.
35. See, for example, Robert Paehlke, *Environmentalism and the Future of Progressive Politics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989); C. Brant Short, *Ronald Reagan and the Public Lands: America's Conservation Debate, 1979-1984* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1989); Bryan G. Norton, *Toward Unity Among Environmentalists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and H. Lewis Ulman, "'Thinking Like a Mountain': Persona, Ethos, and Judgment in American Nature Writing," pp. 46-81 in Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown, eds., *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996).
36. Norris Yates, "The Inadequate Politics of Aldo Leopold," pp. 219-221 in *Proceedings of the Fifth Midwest Prairie Conference* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, 1978).
37. At the time, I was a busy graduate student, and had no time to take on the article. As I remember, my response at the time was: "I'll tell you what. I'll write the article, and if you can get *The Progressive* to publish it simultaneously, I'll do it."
- Nothing came of the suggestion.
38. Susan Flader, "Aldo Leopold and Environmental Citizenship," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters* v. 87 (1999), 23-35.
39. Flader and Callicott, 215.
40. Meine, *Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work*, 525.
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