

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Broad-gauged educator, ecologist, and conservationist. Active in a number of conservation and wildlife groups in the United States. Made major contributions to avian biology, particularly of game birds.

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Who Was Who in America.

Joseph Bongiorno

LEOPOLD, (RAND) ALDO. Bom Burlington, Iowa, 11 January 1887; died Baraboo, Wisconsin, 21 April 1948. Naturalist, forester, wildlife ecologist, educator, writer.

FAMILY AND EDUCATION

Eldest of four children of Carl (furniture company executive) and Clara Starker Leopold. Graduate of Lawrenceville School, 1905. B.S., Sheffield Scientific School, Yale, 1908; master of forestry, Yale, 1909. Married Maria Alvira Estella Bergere, 1912; five children.

POSITIONS

Forest assistant, Apache National Forest, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), 1909–1911. Deputy supervisor, Carson National Forest, USFS, 1911–1912. Supervisor, Carson National Forest, USFS, 1912–1914. Forest examiner, District 3, USFS, 1915–1917. Secretary, Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, 1918–1919. Chief of operations, District 3, USFS, 1919–1924. Assistant director, USFS Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, Wisconsin, 1924–1928. Director of game survey, Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturer's Institute, 1928–1932. Consulting forester, 1932–1933. Professor of game management, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1932–1938. Professor of wildlife management, University of Wisconsin, 1938–1948.

CAREER

Formative experiences as a young naturalist, ornithologist, and hunter along the Mississippi River bottoms near Burlington and in Les Cheneaux Islands of northern Lake Huron, where family regularly spent summers. Member of first generation of trained U.S. foresters. Was innovative force in early Forest Service, pursuing new directions in forest administration, soil conservation and

range management, wilderness protection, game and wildlife protection, recreation policy, and ecological research. Spent first fifteen years of Forest Service career in national forests of American Southwest. During much of 1914–1915, forced to take eighteen months' leave due to near fatal bout of nephritis. Between 1915 and 1919, worked on grazing administration, later on recreation, publicity work, and fish and game administration. From 1915 to 1921, led successful effort to reform New Mexico's state game department as founder and secretary of New Mexico Game Protective Association. From 1919 until 1924, instigated broad innovations in forest inspection procedures, investigated ecological impacts of forest administration in southwestern watersheds, advanced cause of game protection within USFS, and advocated policy of wilderness preservation on national forestlands.

In 1921, published "The Wilderness and Its Place in Forest Recreation Policy," important early proposal to reserve public wilderness areas. As a result, Gila Wilderness Area was designated in 1924, first such in the nation. During his four years at Forest Products Laboratory, Leopold balanced official administrative duties with unofficial activities on behalf of wilderness preservation, game management, and reform of conservation administration in Wisconsin. Much of this latter activity performed through American Game Protective Association and Wisconsin Chapter of Izaak Walton League of America (IWLAW); also active in national ILWA during these years. From 1928 to 1932, led Game Survey for consortium of industry representatives. Made extensive surveys of game habitat conditions in Midwest, consulted with state and federal agencies on game protection and restoration programs, promoted and supervised management-oriented research projects in cooperation with midwestern land-grant universities, and worked within conservation community to advance idea of active, scientifically informed management of game species. Summarized results of his field investigations in *Report on a Game Survey of the North-Central States* (1931), an unprecedented effort to document status and preservation of game species on regional scale. Also chaired, during these years, Game Policy Committee of American Game Conference. The committee report, "American Game Policy" (1930), was first comprehensive statement of essential aims for emerging field of wildlife management.

In all of this work, Leopold refined ideas that helped transform practice of wildlife conservation from rearguard effort concerned primarily with legal restrictions, predator "control," and game farming, to applied science that sought to understand population dynamics and ecological relationships in order to provide stable habitats for all forms of wildlife. These ideas brought together in *Game Management* (1933), first textbook on subject and standard work for several decades. Simultaneously worked to broaden philosophical dimensions of conservation and to understand ecological context of social and historical change. "The Conservation Ethic" (1933) was important early expression of his conservation philosophy. Appointed nation's first professor of game management at University of Wisconsin, 1933. Soon became influential educator

and also leading figure in emergence of wildlife management as a profession. Served as member of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Committee on Wildlife Restoration (1934). Offered post as chief of U.S. Biological Survey, 1934, but declined, preferring research to policy making. With J. Norwood "Ding" Darling, also on president's committee, established Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit system, 1935. Purchased worn-out farmland along Wisconsin River north of Madison (1935) as hunting reserve and family retreat. Also used as testing ground for his theories of wildlife management, as land laboratory, where he and family restored property to ecological health, and as setting for ecological essays he began writing in the 1930s. Traveled to Germany on Carl Schurz Fellowship, 1935, to study history of forest and wildlife management in Central Europe. Visited Sierra Madre in northern Mexico, 1936 and 1937. These experiences impressed on him need for restrained and well-integrated management of natural ecosystems, as opposed to highly artificial, intensive methods of commodity production.

For the last decade of his life, stressed ecological basis of all conservation activity in his work and writing. Continued research, writing, teaching, and advising through World War II. Founding member (1936) and president (1939) of the Wildlife Society; president of Ecological Society of America (1939). Leading figure in dozens of other local, state, regional, and national professional, conservation, and scientific organizations. Adviser to United Nations International Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources (1948). In addition to titles previously mentioned, published some 350 papers, reports, policy statements, reviews, popular articles, essays, editorials, and other documents. In final years, concentrated on lyrical and philosophical essays posthumously published in 1949 as *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*. Later collections of his writings published as *Round River: From the Journals of Aldo Leopold* (1953), *Aldo Leopold's Wilderness* (1991), republished as *Aldo Leopold's Southwest*, 1993, and *The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays by Aldo Leopold* (1991).

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Endowed with a broad education, vast store of field experience, unique command of language and history, wry sense of humor, highly critical mind, and insatiable curiosity, Leopold was a gifted communicator of the scientific basis of conservation as well as the imperative need for environmental awareness, adept at modifying his style to suit his audience and able to employ these qualities in person as well as in print. Made substantial contributions to full range of conservation professions. Played critically important role in broadening narrow utilitarian foundations of the American conservation movement. Was well known only within professional community of conservationists during his lifetime but achieved broad public following with posthumous publication of *A Sand County Almanac*. "The Land Ethic," landmark essay from that book, has

done much to stimulate contemporary interest in environmental ethics and philosophy.

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UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

See Aldo Leopold Papers, University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives; other collections are in University of Wisconsin Archives; Archives of State Historical Society of Wisconsin; U.S. Forest Service records in National Archives; New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Arizona State Historical Society; U.S. Forest Products Laboratory Library; and Yale University Archives.

Curt Meine