



Joseph M. Stehling Jr.
Chairman,
NM Tree Farm Committee

HC 70 Box 109
Ocate, NM 87734

(575)-377-0546

joestehling@earthlink.net

www.nmtreefarmers.org

December 2013



TREE FARM BULLETIN

I often have to pinch myself in order to realize the opportunities that are presented to me due to the career path that I have chosen. One such opportunity developed last September. The American Tree Farm System partnered with the Aldo Leopold Foundation to offer a Land Ethics Workshop to all interested state committee leaders throughout the country. This workshop was held at the Leopold Center near Baraboo, Wisconsin (less than a mile from "The Shack"). As described in the workshop announcement: In *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold set forth his most enduring idea, the "land ethic," a moral responsibility of humans to the natural world. Land Ethic Leaders enables those engaged in forestry and land management to connect with their own values for land and better understand how to communicate with others. This workshop focused on equipping participants with tools to both introduce Leopold's land ethic to a wider audience and also to deepen understanding and engagement through dialogue about the meaning and value of conservation. During the training, participants explore and deepen their own land ethic together through outdoor observation and reflective discussions. Afterwards, they walk away with new relationships, tools, ideas and facilitation skills.

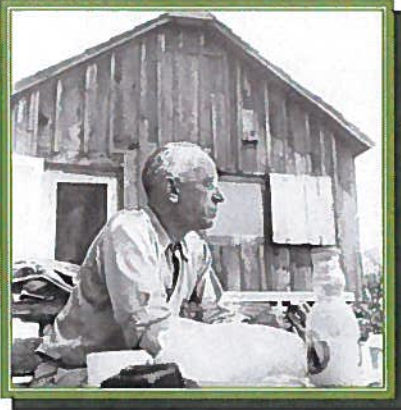
Founded in 1982, the Aldo Leopold Foundation owns and manages the Leopold Center, including the Leopold Shack and Farm, within the adjoining 1,800-acre Leopold Memorial Reserve. The foundation acts as the executor of Leopold's literary estate and archival collection, encourages scholarship on Leopold, and educates audiences about Leopold, his work, and his ideas (The Leopold Center and Leopold Shack & Farm).

As a forestry student in the early 90's I was introduced to the writings of Aldo Leopold and enjoy his work to this day. If you appreciate, own or manage natural resources and haven't read "*A Sand County Almanac*" by Aldo Leopold you have been missing out on an incredible work of literature. I invite you to locate a copy and enjoy over and over again. For a taste of Aldo Leopold's work I have included "Thinking Like a Mountain".

Several take home tools included a film titled "Green Fire, Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for our time" (a Emmy Award Winner); "Leopold Exploration Cards" based on the essays in Aldo Leopold's classic book, *A Sand County Almanac*; and "Exploring the Outdoors with Aldo Leopold" An outdoor activities guide for Educators.

For additional information about Aldo Leopold, The Aldo Leopold Foundation and The Leopold Center visit www.aldoleopold.org.

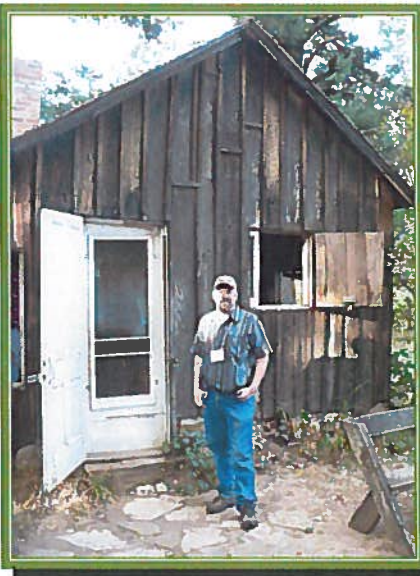




Aldo Leopold at "The Shack"



The Leopold Shack and Farm in the 1930's



A couple of highlights of my trip to the Leopold Center were a visit to "The Shack" and the development of a new network of professionals.

The citizens of Wisconsin should be proud to live in such a beautiful environment. I enjoyed my short time in Wisconsin and hope to one day return for another visit. I would like to thank The Aldo Leopold Foundation, the American Forest Foundation and the generous grant from the US Forest Service for making it possible for me to participate in this workshop.

Arnie Friedt, Forester, New Mexico State Forestry, Cimarron District

FROM THE CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Tree Farm committee I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Make a New Year's resolution to attend the field days and meetings. So far we have received several notes and calls about the Opt-in/Opt-out issue. All were in favor of opting out.



Thinking Like a Mountain

By Aldo Leopold

A deep chesty bawl echoes from rimrock to rimrock, rolls down the mountain, and fades into the far blackness of the night. It is an outburst of wild defiant sorrow, and of contempt for all the adversities of the world.

Every living thing (and perhaps many a dead one as well) pays heed to that call. To the deer it is a reminder of the way of all flesh, to the pine a forecast of midnight scuffles and of blood upon the snow, to the coyote a promise of gleanings to come, to the cowman a threat of red ink at the bank, to the hunter a challenge of fang against bullet. Yet behind these obvious and immediate hopes and fears there lies a deeper meaning, known only to the mountain itself. Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf.

Those unable to decipher the hidden meaning know nevertheless that it is there, for it is felt in all wolf country, and distinguishes that country from all other land. It tingles in the spine of all who hear wolves by night, or who scan their tracks by day. Even without sight or sound of wolf, it is implicit in a hundred small events: the midnight whinny of a pack horse, the rattle of rolling rocks, the bound of a fleeing deer, the way shadows lie under the spruces. Only the ineducable tyro can fail to sense the presence or absence of wolves, or the fact that mountains have a secret opinion about them.

My own conviction on this score dates from the day I saw a wolf die. We were eating lunch on a high rimrock, at the foot of which a turbulent river elbowed its way. We saw what we thought was a doe fording the torrent, her breast awash in white water. When she climbed the bank toward us and shook out her tail, we realized our error: it was a wolf. A half-dozen others, evidently grown pups, sprang from the willows and all joined in a welcoming melee of wagging tails and playful maulings. What was literally a pile of wolves writhed and tumbled in the center of an open flat at the foot of our rimrock.

In those days we had never heard of passing up a chance to kill a wolf. In a second we were pumping lead into the pack, but with more excitement than accuracy: how to aim a steep downhill shot is always confusing. When our rifles were empty, the old wolf was down, and a pup was dragging a leg into impassable slide-rocks.

We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes—something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.

* * * * *

Since then I have lived to see state after state extirpate its wolves. I have watched the face of many a newly wolfless mountain, and seen the south-facing slopes wrinkle with a maze of new deer trails. I have seen every edible bush and seedling browsed, first to anaemic desuetude, and then to death. I have seen every edible tree defoliated to the height of a saddlehorn. Such a mountain looks as if someone had given God a new pruning shears, and forbidden Him all other exercise. In the end the



starved bones of the hoped-for deer herd, dead of its own too-much, bleach with the bones of the dead sage, or molder under the high-lined junipers.

I now suspect that just as a deer herd lives in mortal fear of its wolves, so does a mountain live in mortal fear of its deer. And perhaps with better cause, for while a buck pulled down by wolves can be replaced in two or three years, a range pulled down by too many deer may fail of replacement in as many decades. So also with cows. The cowman who cleans his range of wolves does not realize that he is taking over the wolf's job of trimming the herd to fit the range. He has not learned to think like a mountain. Hence we have dustbowls, and rivers washing the future into the sea.

* * * * *

We all strive for safety, prosperity, comfort, long life, and dullness. The deer strives with this supple legs, the cowman with trap and poison, the statesman with pen, the most of us with machines, votes, and dollars, but it all comes to the same thing: peace in our time. A measure of success in this is all well enough, and perhaps is a requisite to objective thinking, but too much safety seems to yield only danger in the long run. Perhaps this is behind Thoreau's dictum: In wildness is the salvation of the world. Perhaps this is the hidden meaning in the howl of the wolf, long known among mountains, but seldom perceived among men.

Reprinted from *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold, published by Oxford University Press, 1949.

