

An introduction to *"Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time"*

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June 8, 2012 – Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts

June 9, 2012 – Norfolk Library, Norfolk, Connecticut

August 18, 2012 – Doolittle Lake Club, Norfolk, Connecticut (Ted Byers Memorial Lecture)

Fall 2012 – Christ Church Cathedral, Springfield, Massachusetts (date TBD)

"Relegating conservation to the government is like relegating virtue to the Sabbath. It turns over to professionals what should be the daily work of amateurs."

Aldo Leopold, 1935

...or, paraphrasing Tip O'Neill ...*"All conservation is local."*

The award-winning film we are about to watch is the product of decades of scholarship by Curt Meine, Susan Flader, and others, and years of work by the Steve and Ann Dunsky and Dave Steinke, US Forest Service filmmakers. These are the same talented folks who made *"The Greatest Good"* to commemorate the centennial of the US Forest Service in 2005. Underwriting support for this project came from the U.S. Forest Service, the Aldo Leopold Foundation, and the Center for Humans and Nature.

I'm sure that many of us here tonight can remember the first time we read *"A Sand County Almanac"* and what a profound impression it made on our consciousness of the world around us.¹ By teaching, not preaching, Leopold reminds us of our personal responsibilities to: (1) conserve the environment that sustains us, *and* (2) honor our obligations to posterity.

In many important ways, Leopold finished what George Perkins Marsh, Franklin Hough, John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, John Burroughs, Raphael Zon, and others had started. He succeeded in joining esthetics and ethics *with* ecology and economics. We now lump these component parts together in the short-hand definition of "sustainability." This is good, I suppose, as long as we are mindful of Leopold's legacy. I think he might remind us, perhaps even plead with us, not to oversimplify but to continually look for ways to be better students and better stewards of the ecosystems that provide our food, clean our air, filter our water, and nourish our souls. Enjoy the film...

¹ If you haven't read it – order one from the Aldo Leopold Foundation website (not Amazon).