

# THE LEOPOLD WRITING PROGRAM

2020 ALDO LEOPOLD WRITING CONTEST AWARD WINNER

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HONORABLE MENTION, GRADES 6-7

## Reuniting Ecology and Economy

“Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land,” said Aldo Leopold. The meanings of ecology and economy have separated as the English language has evolved. We could solve our environmental problems by helping others see that our society’s economy relies on our nature’s ecology. This could open up people’s eyes to their impact on the world and how their position in their economy affects our ecology. Currently, most people make their choices considering only rules of economy, and that needs to change because the choices that people are making are hurting the planet and causing climate change.

First, let’s look at these words’ roots. Oikos is the Greek word for family, family property, and house. Oikos is the eco- in both ecology and economy. Ecology ends in -logy which comes from logia and means “the study of.” The -nomy in economy comes from nomos which means law and culture. Nowadays, ecology is a branch of study in biology. It studies the way organisms live in their habitats and their communities. Economy now means the way we share resources in a community.

These words are both about living communities with their own needs for resources and goods, and, although we are different in our own ways, we still depend on each other, like a family. Whether or not you like it, we need nature, it provides the building blocks of all economy, and so we need ecological studies to sustain our world and change our ways of only relying on the laws of economy. Nature is our biggest home, it provides us with food, air, and water. Nature also has a way of balancing itself, of making sure that everyone gets what they need. Aldo Leopold wanted people to learn from it and create our rules based on what we see in nature.

Humans have been killing nature, from logging to plastic pollution. We need to learn from nature and become more sustainable as a group. We need the air that nature gives us, we need its resources, water, and food. Nature is all we need, yet most of us only worry about our economic status, where we fit into it. By remembering that ecology and economy grew from the same root, we could help people see that both are important. There was nature before humans came with our economy, and we will still need nature if we want to sustain our economy. In fact, if we care for our economy we should care for our ecology too.



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