



2021 ALDO LEOPOLD WRITING CONTEST

Aldo Leopold is most widely known as the author of *A Sand County Almanac*. Published in 1949, the book is a classic in Western literature. Leopold believed our economic wellbeing could not be separated from the wellbeing of our environment. His land ethic asserts: “Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” Leopold also believed our idea of community should be enlarged to include non-human elements such as soils, waters, plants, animals: “That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics.”

RESOURCES Students are encouraged to read “The Land Ethic” and other essays by Aldo Leopold as part of your preparation. These can be found in *A Sand County Almanac*, available at local libraries, bookstores, and on the internet. Visit www.LeopoldWritingProgram.org for additional background resources.

ESSAY TOPIC

“Acts of creation are ordinarily reserved for gods and poets, but humbler folk may circumvent this restriction if they know how. To plant a pine, for example, one need be neither god nor poet; one need only own a good shovel.”
– ALDO LEOPOLD, “Pines Above the Snow,” *A Sand County Almanac*

As the novel coronavirus spread in 2020, we needed to stay home. We had to turn back to familiar landscapes, acquaint ourselves with our yards and neighborhoods, and look more closely at our own skies and landscapes.

“Using Leopold’s land ethic as a guidepost, think about lessons we can learn from staying home. What acts of creation – be that as poet or as planter – did you unexpectedly find yourself taking up, and how did your creations build on some of New Mexico’s senses of dwelling with the Earth, such as *querencia*, kinship, *acequias*, and aridity?”

ELIGIBILITY Contest is open to all students enrolled in grades 6-12 in public, private, and home schools in the state of New Mexico. Students must submit original work and have a sponsoring teacher sign the contest entry form. One entry per person.

FORMAT & AWARDS The length of the essays vary by category as follows:

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|---|---------------|-------------------|
| Grades 6-7: | 300-500 words | \$500 First Place |
| Grades 8-9: | 400-600 words | \$500 First Place |
| Grades 10-12: | 500-700 words | \$500 First Place |
| David E. Stuart Humanitarian Award for Overall Best Essay (at judges’ discretion) | | \$250 Bonus |

Entries may be typed or handwritten. The entry must not identify the author, sponsor, or school so that judging can be anonymous. Completed entries must be scanned into two separate PDF files: (1) the completed essay, and (2) the completed entry form (attached). Both files must be emailed to leopoldwritingprogram@gmail.com. Please include “Aldo Leopold Writing Contest” in the subject line of the email submission. If there are technological barriers to providing PDF files through email, please call Glenda Muirhead, LWP Board Member. Alternative submissions will only be accepted with prior approval from Leopold Writing Program. 505.208.2497

leopoldwritingcontest@gmail.com

DEADLINE All entries must be emailed by 11:59 pm on Tuesday 16 February 2021.

For more information about the Leopold Writing Program, please visit:

LeopoldWritingProgram.org



2021 ALDO LEOPOLD WRITING CONTEST ENTRY FORM

EMAIL TO: leopoldwritingcontest@gmail.com

EMAIL DEADLINE: 11:59 pm on Tuesday 16 February 2021

Complete submissions must include two separate pdf files: the ESSAY and the ENTRY FORM.

AUTHOR'S NAME: _____ GRADE: _____

PARENT'S/GUARDIAN'S NAME: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: _____

SPONSORING TEACHER'S NAME _____

SCHOOL: _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS: _____

TEACHER'S PHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: _____

To the best of my knowledge the writing is original work produced by the author.

SPONSORING TEACHER'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Teachers, how did you hear about this year's writing contest?

- Radio ad
- Email from _____
- Colleague – please share name _____
- Other _____