



WRITING CONTEST

THE LEOPOLD WRITING PROGRAM

invites New Mexico students in grades 6-12

to submit original essays for our 2023 Writing Contest. Please consider the quotes below, and then respond to the ESSAY PROMPT that follows.

In "Returning the Gift," Robin Wall Kimmerer writes:

We are showered every day with the gifts of the Earth, gifts we have neither earned nor paid for: air to breathe, nurturing rain, black soil, berries and honeybees, the tree that became this page, a bag of rice and the exuberance of a field of goldenrod and asters at full bloom.... Though the Earth provides us with all that we need, we have created a consumption-driven economy that asks, "What more can we take from the Earth? and almost never, "What does the Earth ask of us in return?"

Aldo Leopold, in his foreword to *A Sand County Almanac*, writes:

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

ESSAY PROMPT

After reflecting on Kimmerer's and Leopold's thoughts about our relationship to the land, what do you see as your role in returning the Earth's gifts?

Cash prizes will be awarded to winning essayists in three grade categories: 6-7, 8-9, and 10-12.

For complete instructions and entry form, please visit leopoldwritingprogram.org and follow Writing Contest links. **Submissions are accepted through February 15, 2023.**

Robin Wall Kimmerer, author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*, will be the LWP 2023 Annual Lecturer on April 22, and will also present awards to the Writing Contest Winners.