



2023 ALDO LEOPOLD WRITING CONTEST

Aldo Leopold is best known as the author of *A Sand County Almanac*. Published in 1949, the book is a classic in Western literature. Leopold believed our economic well-being could not be separated from the well-being of our environment. His land ethic asserts: "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."

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. Also consider reading Robin Wall Kimmerer's essay, "Returning the Gift." [CLICK HERE](#) for a pdf file of this essay.

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 - Please answer this question in your essay

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?

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 The length of the essays varies by category as follows:

Grades 6-7	300-500 words
Grades 8-9	400-600 words
Grades 10-12	500-700 words

AWARDS

First Place in each Grade Level - \$750 award

Honorable Mention – \$100 award (up to 2 per Grade Level, at judges' discretion)

ENTRIES May be typed or handwritten. Completed entries must be submitted as two separate files: (1) the completed **ENTRY FORM**, and (2) the **ESSAY**. **The essay must not identify the author, teacher, or school so that judging can be anonymous.** If there are technological barriers to providing PDF files through email, please call or text Glenda Muirhead, LWP Board Member (505.208.2497) or send email to above email address, to pre-approve alternative submissions.

DEADLINE All entries must be emailed to LeopoldWritingContest@usgo.net by 11:59 pm on **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023**