

THE LEOPOLD WRITING PROGRAM

2 0 1 8 A L D O L E O P O L D W R I T I N G C O N T E S T A W A R D W I N N E R



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BEST ESSAY, GRADES 6-7

Aldo Leopold coined the term “land ethic” in his book *A Sand County Almanac*. He said “Ethical behavior is doing the right thing when no one else is watching—even when doing the wrong thing is legal.” I like to think of the land ethic as a set of right and wrongs in which we treat all plants, waters, animals and soil with respect. When one plant, animal, soil or water in the ecosystem is missing it can sometimes lead to the system collapsing.

When Aldo came up with this idea it changed everything. No one thought about looking at the whole picture and how harming one thing could affect everything else. Hence, Aldo is famous in New Mexico and throughout the USA.

Let me introduce another local land ethic leader in New Mexico. Josh Nelson is a park guide at Carlsbad Caverns National Park. He has been interested in his current job since he was little. Josh believes that we need to treat the land and animals with respect and keep the land, animals, water and plants safe. Josh looks at his job as an opportunity. He believes that the land ethic is not only an ethic to follow sometimes, but an ethic to live by on a daily basis. He provides interesting facts and protects the animals from the tourists.

Josh had previously worked on an organic farm and as a guide for white-water rafting. As a child, he loved to visit national parks and to be outside. Josh is one of many people who are taking action and following the land ethic. Leopold’s land ethic has been followed long after his death and it is a very influential ethic around the world.



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