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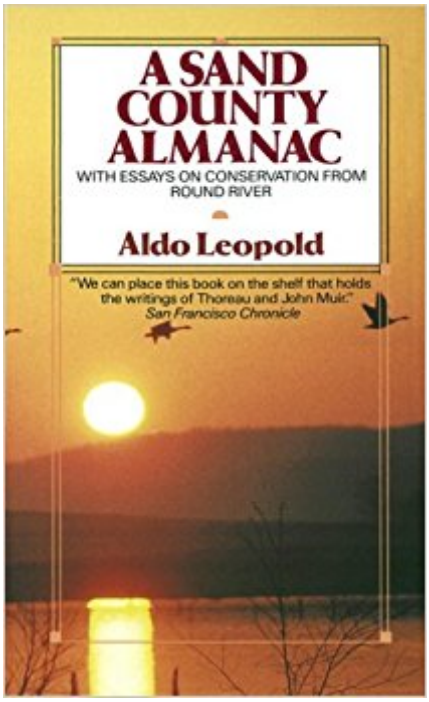
A Sand County Almanac (Outdoor Essays & Reflections)



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Synopsis

"We can place this book on the shelf that holds the writings of Thoreau and John Muir." San Francisco ChronicleThese astonishing portraits of the natural world explore the breathtaking diversity of the unspoiled American landscape -- the mountains and the prairies, the deserts and the coastlines. A stunning tribute to our land and a bold challenge to protect the world we love.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Published in 1949, shortly after the author’s death, A Sand County Almanac is a classic of nature writing, widely cited as one of the most influential nature books ever published. Writing from the vantage of his summer shack along the banks of the Wisconsin River, Leopold mixes essay, polemic, and memoir in his book’s pages. In one famous episode, he writes of killing a female wolf early in his career as a forest ranger, coming upon his victim just as she was dying, "in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes.... I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, no wolves would mean hunters’ paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view." Leopold’s road-to-Damascus change of view would find its fruit some years later in his so-called land ethic, in which he held that nothing that disturbs the balance of nature is right. Much of Almanac elaborates on this basic premise, as well as on Leopold’s view that it is something of a human duty to preserve as much wild land as possible, as a kind of bank for the biological future of all species. Beautifully written, quiet, and elegant, Leopold’s book deserves continued study and

discussion today. --Gregory McNamee --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

These original essays on the natural environment by renowned conservationist Leopold (1887-1948) were first published posthumously in 1949. In this edition, more than 80 lush photographs shot by nature photographer Sewell on Leopold's former Wisconsin farm accompany the text. Following the seasons, Leopold, whose seminal work in the U.S. Forest Service and in books and magazines helped shape the conservation movement in this country, shared his perceptive and carefully observed portraits of nature month by month. In April, he watched the "sky dance" of the woodcock, who flew upward in a series of spirals. As he hunted partridges in October, his way was lit by "red lanterns," the blackberry leaves that shone in the sun. A November rumination details how the products of tree diseases provide wooded shelters for woodpeckers, hives for wild bees and food for chickadees. Included also is an appreciative essay on wild marshland and several pieces stressing the importance of protecting the natural environment. Leopold sadly observed, "there is yet no ethic dealing with man's relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it." His hope that society would develop an "ecological conscience" by placing what should be preserved above what is economically expedient remains relevant today. These evocative essays about the farm Leopold loved will again be enjoyed by nature lovers and preservationists alike. Though the book has been continuously in print, this beautiful illustrated edition, with its introduction by nature writer Brower (The Starship and the Canoe) will attract fans and newcomers and will make a great gift book this holiday season. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book was recommended by the leader of the Master Naturalist class I'm taking. After a couple pages, I was hooked. Aldo Leopold has a wonderful way of telling the story of all the goings on around his Sand County farm that most of us would never see or hear. For example, his two page philsophical discussion with himself about which of two trees to turn into firewood teaches us so much about trees without seeming like a lesson. Or his recounting of the ecological history of the area decade by decade as he saws through the rings representing the years that the nearly century old oak witnessed. He recounts how he figures out what animals inhabit the area, what there range is, what they eat and so much more in beautifully crafted language that is just pleasant to read. And there's so much more. A great read for anyone interested in learning about the natural world around us while be thoroughly entertained.

Loaned this book many years ago and didn’t get it back. Someone liked the book as much as I do? Read it again and enjoyed it even more. Being older now was part of it, but the current times make the book more compelling than ever. It would be a shame not to read Leopold before there are no wild lands left. This is a good edition. Be sure not to get the new and improved edition that removes references to evolution to satisfy the blue noses who will never read the book anyway. The introduction was written in 1948 and is still crisp.

This is one of my most favorite books. Leopold really was the father of the ’environmental movement’ (he died in 1948), and his perspectives and writing style have rarely been matched for insight and reading enjoyment. I’ve given a good number of copies to friends and family members, and I keep a copy handy for myself, too. I pick it up whenever I want to get in a worthy short story about ma nature and how mankind is generally pretty shortsighted about her. I always wonder to myself how Leopold learned so much (he saw so much more than the ’average person’ could) and how he developed his perspectives and writing style. One of my favorite stories is called ’Atom X’.

Currently reading this book for my college biology class. Some may say it’s boring or dry, but if you really are an ’outdoorsy’ (or environmental/ nature loving) kind of person, I believe that you will like this book. I had slight difficulty getting into the book, but once you find your reading groove with this book, it really makes you think about a lot of important conservation topics and issues, that we still face today.

This is one of the seminal works of conservationism and systems ecology. The eloquence of the prose elevates it to poetry, and I would consider Leopold the poet laureate of the of the modern conservation movement. There is so much in this little book that one can read it twenty times and gain new insights every time. Leopold loved nature, he was one of the founding members of The Wilderness Society, but he was no tree hugger. He acknowledged the necessity of humans using the land but recognized the limits that we must place on that use to maintain nature and by extension, to ensure our own survival. Anyone who is passionate about environmental issues should read this book to gain supreme insight as to why those issues are vitally important to the world.

Really worth five stars for any naturalist or environmentalist--almost as well as Muir, finds words to

describe that in nature untouched we commune deeply with things wild, mysterious, eternal. A sense of reverence and awe. Almost lyrically describes the magic of the Sandhill Crane--passages worth rereading for we who have felt for a creature we treasure. An acute awareness even in the 1940s of the damage already done by man to critical habitat--a clear-eyed assessment of tragic mismanagement of lands and the degradation that occurs. Captures the bleak irony of the loss of the Passenger Pigeon--farmers protecting their livelihood--against the uncountable hoard of the birds who suddenly were no more.Not a lament--leaves one uplifted in the sense of determined--to see through Sand County eyes--to multiply efforts with new awareness of what's at stake today as then.

Before you buy this, know that it's mostly comprised of poetic/rambling essays with archaic language. There is very little actual adventure stories in it. I bought the book because people refer to it as "a classic" and Aldo Leopold was supposed to be a great outdoorsman. This is much more in line with books by Ed Abbey or Rachel Carson.

This book is about the most perfect non-partisan political statement on the outdoors, nature, and human values as could be imagined to exist. The world would be a better place if more people would read it.

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