

The Land Ethic was an interesting essay to read. I would not have thought so before starting conservation biology, but now I realized that it has a lot of great points. I think that Aldo Leopold had a good vision of what going on in our world then and now. Leopold tells us that we need to realize that we are not the only living things in our world. He believes that we should be a member, not the master, of the land community. This essay helped me to realize that no matter where we are or what we are doing; we are impacting some other form of life. It could even be a small organism in the dirt that we walk on. We need to be more conservation minded in all that we do.

Aldo Leopold talked about the community having an economic driven land ethic. I feel that today, unfortunately, we follow the same type of land ethic. Stewards of the land will do what is right for the land only when they profit economically from it.

Who has the duty to preserve the land? Is it us as individuals, is it the government or is it every member of the community both human and non-human? If the duty is on us as individuals then who has placed the duty on us, was it ourselves or was it the community telling us through extinction of plants and animals that we are damaging the very community that we rely on? These are all questions that were brought to my mind while reading the land ethic.

Leopold told us that the "land is not merely soil". It is a "fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals". I had never thought before of how the soil is the basis for the land pyramid. The soil feeds the plants, which feeds the animals, which feed us. He warns us to be careful of making changes to the pyramid. "The less violent the man-made

changes, the greater the probability of successful readjustment in the pyramid". The more things that we change, the more we can damage our land.

My conservation philosophy is probably similar to a lot of peoples. My family has a farm so I have always been aware of preserving the land. I believe that we need to do everything we can to preserve the land. If we don't try, then certainly the land will not be a beautiful place for our children and grandchildren. I think that people need to stay on designated trails and in designated areas when enjoying the great outdoors. We need to pack out everything that we take in and try to make it look like we were never there. If everyone would just try to follow those few things then it would make a huge difference. I have come to have this philosophy through the Boy Scouts of America and my family.

I think the way that we start to respect the fellow members of our community and our community as a whole is by simply being aware of our daily impact on others. We need to be aware that everything we do. Even mowing our grass or tilling our gardens can affect our community. We need to think about what is in our community, and more importantly, what role we should be playing in it.

I believe that for the most part, our land relation today is still the same as when Aldo Leopold wrote "The land-relation is still strictly economic, entailing privileges but not obligations." I know that there are exceptions to the rule, but for the most part if the steward of the land will not benefit economically from doing the right thing for the biotic community, then they will not do it. I agree with Leopold that we have a lot of land privileges, but not many obligations. I feel that the way to help us do the right thing for the land is to have consequences

that will hurt us where it counts, and that is the pocketbook. There needs to be steep fines for destroying the land.

When Leopold talked about extending the community sensibilities to all members of the community, nonhuman as well as human, it really got me thinking about the community that I live in. I first thought about human interaction as it is today and how many times we see people pass other people who are in need. Do we really perceive other people in need, or are we so caught up in ourselves that we don't notice them? If we would just notice them and try to help, our community among humans would strengthen and improve immensely. I feel that it is exactly the same concept and principle for our nonhuman community. If I could be more aware and appreciative of my community both human and non-human, then I think that my life would be better and honestly a lot harder, because I would not live it the same way that I am doing so now.

I only partially agree with the statement "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." I agree that it is good to preserve the biotic community when possible. I think that if something will not preserve the biotic community then it needs to have a greater benefit to the community than it is worth. How do you judge the worth of each member of the community that you do not know? I feel that if for example you plow a new field to plant food for humans then it is worth disrupting the existing biotic community to make food.

My ethical relationship with the land is motivated by both beauty and duty. I feel that because the earth is so beautiful, we have a duty to preserve it. In our society today the

majority of our activities, thoughts, and actions are driven by beauty and aesthetics. There are millions of dollars spent on beauty every year. People are having plastic surgery to “enhance” their looks, businesses are spending millions on their buildings to aesthetically please the eye, and people are dating only those people whom they feel are beautiful. With all that being said I would have to say that beauty is more motivating to me in my land preservation.

The question does my land ethic emanate primarily from self-interest, or from a true interest in non-human elements is a tough one for me to answer. This takes a lot of honest self-reflecting. To honestly answer that question at this point in my life, I would have to say that it does come from self-interest. I want my children and grandchildren to be able to enjoy the great outdoors and the privileges that we have from our land.

The Land Ethic is very educational, insightful, and caused a lot of self-reflection. I feel that this assignment has been very useful in helping me understand what conservation really is. The essay helped me realize that my community does not just include other humans, but includes organisms. It did not really change my opinion about the land, but it did help strengthen my own personal land ethic.

When I finished reading the land ethic I felt angry at the human race and what we are doing to our own land. I also felt more educated and aware of what actually needs to be done to help preserve our land. I think that every person in the world should read the land ethic. I think that if everyone read it then it would be a lot easier to get the funding and support to move forward on more conservation projects.

In the land ethic Aldo Leopold talks about farmers and how they don't care for the land and that really bothered me. I think that for the most part farmers are very aware and do what they can to preserve the land because the land is how they make their living. The part that I liked the best is when he talks about the land pyramid. I have always known that we rely on other animals and plants for our existence but he put it in a way that made perfect sense. I am glad that I had the opportunity to read the land ethic because it has changed the way that I look at our land. It has caused me to be more aware of who and what is in my community. I now realize that to my every action there will be a consequence, whether it is good or bad.