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Aldo Leopold and Ecological Restoration as a Tool to Meld the Practical and Aesthetic Aspects of Environmental Stewardship

Early 20th Century resource conservation efforts were frustrated by the dichotomous perspectives of Gifford Pinchot, who viewed natural resource conservation in active commodity-oriented terms, and preservationist John Muir who saw the destruction of the landscape as an aesthetic and moral catastrophe. During 1930-1947 Aldo Leopold introduced ecological restoration as a unifying path for economic and aesthetic sustainability. Leopold’s masterworks *A Sand County Almanac* and *Round River* brought analytic rigor and evocative prose together to address the larger issue of mans’ long-term relationship with land. Yet today modern scientists are still largely unable to restore ecosystems. I address whether Leopold truly understood the challenges restoration would hold, and where he might find solutions for our current predicament.