

SHACK OF THE NEW



"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." These words capture the essence of Aldo Leopold. The ecologist, forester, and author, who achieved international stature as the pioneer of a new conservation movement, got much of his inspiration—both practical and intellectual—in a little shack on the Wisconsin River. **THAT SHACK WAS JUST DESIGNATED** a national historic landmark, along with the surrounding 264-acre farm, in Baraboo, Wisconsin, for its association with the evolution of land management and our stewardship of the natural world. Leopold's ethic, expressed famously in his 1949 book *Sand County Almanac*, changed the way people thought about forest and range management, soil and water use, private land policy, biodiversity, and sustainable agriculture. His name is often mentioned in the company of Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and Gifford Pinchot. **THE SHACK WAS JUST AN OLD CHICKEN COOP** when Leopold arrived in 1935, having bought the property as a weekend family retreat after joining the faculty at the University of Wisconsin. The land was sandy and denuded after decades of aggressive 19th century farming and grazing, devastated by overuse and drought, driving wildlife away. The shack and its environs became a lab for Leopold's ideas. **THE ALMANAC, SET ON THE LITTLE FARM BY THE RIVER**, documented his observations as he and his family restored the ruined ecosystem. Today, the site is maintained by the Aldo Leopold Foundation, which advocates responsible land use through education and research. **TO SEE THE NHL NOMINATION**, go to www.nps.gov/history/nhl/designations/samples/wi/AldoLeopold.pdf. The Leopold Foundation is at www.aldoleopold.org/.