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The Path to the Land Conservancy of Adams County

Abstract

As part of this year's observation of Land Conservancy Month, board member and retired Gettysburg College English Department chair Mary Margaret Stewart has prepared an annotated bibliography of readings on land preservation, land conservation, and land trusts. Beginning with Henry David Thoreau and John Muir and extending through the works of Wendell Berry and Annie Dillard and on to a survey of books discussing the philosophy behind the land trust movement, Mary Margaret's bibliography is an outstanding resource for those who want to learn more about protecting our wild and undeveloped spaces.

Keywords

land conservation, land conservancy, adams county, pennsylvania

Disciplines

Natural Resources and Conservation

Comments

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THE PATH TO THE LAND CONSERVANCY OF ADAMS COUNTY

Land Preservation/Land Conservancy, Land Trusts Selected Bibliography Arranged Chronologically Rather than Alphabetically

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), philosopher, writer, naturalist

After living a simple life close to nature in a small cabin he built on Walden Pond in Massachusetts for a little over two years (1845-1847), Henry Thoreau wrote a series of essays based upon his observations and experiences, published in 1854 as *Walden, or, Life in the Woods*, in which he advocated a life intimate with nature. The work, only modestly successful when published, has become a standard work in American literature and an inspiration to naturalists, environmentalists, preservationists, and conservationists.

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden: A Fully Annotated Edition*, ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

John Muir (1838-1914), farmer, naturalist, explorer, preservationist, founder of The Sierra Club, writer

Born in Dunbar, Scotland, John Muir emigrated as a young boy with his family to land in Wisconsin. After attending the University of Wisconsin, he walked from the Midwest to the Gulf of Mexico. He explored the majestic mountains and forests of the West and eventually Alaska. He devoted his life to understanding and protecting nature and was largely responsible for the establishment of California's Sequoia National Park and Yosemite National Park. His sphere of influence has been immense.

John Muir, *John Muir: Nature Writings: The Story of My Boyhood and Youth; My First Summer in the Sierra; The Mountains of California; Stickeen; Essays*. New York: Library of America, 1997.

_____, *The Wild Muir: Twenty-Two of John Muir's Greatest Adventures*. Yosemite Conservancy, 2013.

Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946), forester, first chief of the USDA Department of Forestry (1905), conservationist, advisor to President Theodore Roosevelt, twice governor of Pennsylvania (1923-27, 1931-35)

Perhaps best known as the protector of American forests, Gifford Pinchot introduced better management for both national and privately owned forests. He

worked for controlled, profitable use of forests and all natural resources, arguing for the “greatest good for the greatest number of people.” Unlike Muir, who believed forests and wilderness should be preserved for their own sakes and opposed “commercializing nature,” Pinchot advocated sustainable development. He opposed massive cuttings in forests and fought against clear cutting in Washington and Oregon. The Gifford Pinchot National Forest in the State of Washington and the Gifford Pinchot State Park in Lewisburg, York County, Pennsylvania, are named in his honor.

Gifford Pinchot, *The Fight for Conservation*. Book Jungle (Open Library), 2009.
_____, *Breaking New Ground* (autobiography). Washington, DC: Island Press, 1998.

Char Miller, *Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism* (Pioneers of Conservation). Washington, DC: Island Press, 2004.

_____, *Seeking the Greatest Good: The Conservation Legacy of Gifford Pinchot*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013.

Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), conservationist, President of the United States (1901-1909)

Motivated by a strong desire to preserve wild life and its habitat across the country, Theodore Roosevelt worked to make conservation a central concern in the United States. Although he admired John Muir and toured Yosemite Valley with him in 1903, he opposed Muir’s preservationist view and adopted instead the conservationist view of Gifford Pinchot concerning natural resources. During his presidency, the United States established 5 National Parks, 51 Bird Preserves, 4 Game Preserves, and 150 National Forests.

Douglas G. Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

Aldo Leopold (1887-1948), forester, conservationist, ecologist, educator, writer

Following graduation from the Yale Forest School in 1909, Aldo Leopold entered the newly established U. S. Forestry Service, serving in Arizona, New Mexico, and Wisconsin. He became particularly interested in wildlife management and wrote the first textbook in that field in 1933. He held the first chair in game management at the University of Wisconsin. A prolific writer who wished to reach the general reader as well as his professional colleagues, he explored the relationship between humans and the natural world. He saw the natural world “as a community to which we all belong.” In his final essay, “The Land Ethic,” he argued that we must expand our moral concerns to include land.

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Curt Meine, *Aldo Leopold, His Life and Work*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.

Sigurd F. Olson (1899-1982), nature writer, educator, conservationist, advocate for protecting wilderness

Sigurd F. Olson is most associated with the lakes and forests of the Quetico-Superior country of northern Minnesota and northwestern Ontario, where he served for many years as a wilderness and canoe guide. He fought to get this land and water, known as the “Boundary Waters Canoe Area,” declared a full wilderness, which it was in 1978. Besides writing and teaching, he helped draft The Wilderness Act of 1964, served first as vice-president and then as president of The Wilderness Society (1963-1971), and was influential in establishing several national parks and wilderness areas.

Sigurd F. Olson, *The Singing Wilderness* (1956 reprint). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1997.

_____, *Spirit of the North: Essential Articles and Speeches*, ed. David Backes. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2001.

David Backes, *A Wilderness Within: The Life of Sigurd F. Olson*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Wallace Stegner (1909-1993), writer of fiction and non-fiction, influential professor of literature and writing, conservationist, advocate for preservation of wilderness

In the field of American literature, Wallace Stegner distinguished himself as a prize-winning writer of novels and short stories and as the founder of the Creative Writing Program at Stanford University in 1945, in which he taught until his retirement in 1971. In the environmental movement, he distinguished himself as the writer of “The Wilderness Letter,” an eloquent argument for federal protection of wilderness written to the “Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission” in 1960. This letter later became the introduction to the Wilderness Act of 1964, which established the National Wilderness Protection System.

Wallace Stegner, *The Sound of Mountain Water*. New York: Penguin Book, 1997.

_____, *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs: Living and Writing in the West*. New York: Modern Library, 2002.

Rachel Carson (1907-1964), scientist, ecologist, and writer

After receiving her M.A. in zoology from John Hopkins University in 1932, Rachel Carson worked for the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries and then joined the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a scientist, writer, and editor. She began writing in her personal time for a general audience, focusing primarily upon the ocean. Central to her thinking was the relationship of the human being to nature. She saw the human as

a part of nature but the only one who had the power to alter nature, perhaps irreversibly. In 1952, she resigned from her government position to spend all her time writing. Increasingly concerned over the use of synthetic chemical pesticides in agriculture and insect control, she began her careful research into these pesticides and their short term and long term effect on nature (primarily birds), a study which culminated in the publication of *Silent Spring* in 1962, first as a three part serial article in *The New Yorker* and then as a book. It had, and continues to have, a major influence in environmental thinking.

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1962 (many later reprints).

Linda Lear, *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009.

Edward Abbey (1927-1989), writer of fiction and non-fiction, environmental activist, preservationist

Although Edward Abbey was born and raised in Pennsylvania, he is now identified with the deserts of the West. He became a seasonal ranger for the U. S. National Park Service in the Arches National Monument (Utah) in 1956-1957 and then in the Oregon Pipe Cactus National Monument (Arizona/New Mexico) in the 1960s. Based on copious notes he had taken while living in the desert in southeastern Utah, he wrote *Desert Solitude: A Season in the Wilderness* (published 1968), now sometimes compared to Thoreau's *Walden*. Believing that the wilderness must be preserved, Abbey criticized government land policies, attacked what he called "industrial tourism," and claimed the national parks had become "national parking lots." Deliberatively provocative in his writings, Abbey inspired radical environmental groups, especially Earth First.

Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness*. New York: Touchstone, 1990.

Gary Snyder (b.1930), poet, essayist, environmental activist

A prize-winning poet centered in San Francisco, Gary Snyder has been associated with the Beat poets and deeply influenced by Native American culture and also by Zen Buddhism. As a young man, he worked two summers as a fire lookout on Crater Mountain (1952) and on Sourdough Mountain (1953) in the Northern Cascades in Washington. He also worked on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation (central Oregon), first as a timber scaler and then later as a chokersetter (fastening cables to logs) in a logging operations. In 1955 he became a Buddhist and between the years 1956 and 1969, spent time in Japan, where he studied Zen, immersed himself in the Zen tradition, and learned Japanese. Throughout his life he has frequently returned to live in the forests of the Northwest. His poetry and essays reflect his experiences, his interests, his love of nature, and his belief that nature

and humanity are not separate.

Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island*. New York: New Directions, 1974.

_____, *A Place in Space: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Watersheds*. Revised Edition. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2008.

_____, *Mountains and Rivers Without End: Poem*. Second Edition. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2008.

_____, *The Practice of the Wild: With a New Preface by the Author*. Berkeley, CA, Counterpoint Press, 2010. (essays first published in 1990)

_____, *Danger on Peaks*. Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004.

Wendell Berry (b.1934), farmer, educator, conservationist, naturalist, writer of novels, essays, and poetry

Although his father practiced law, Wendell Berry grew up on a farm in Kentucky and worked on that farm and on neighboring farms. After receiving his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Kentucky and studying at Stanford University as a Wallace Stegner Creative Writing Fellow, he taught literature and creative writing at a number of universities before accepting a faculty position at the University of Kentucky. He and his wife bought a farm they call Lanes Landing near Port Royal, Kentucky, where he still farms and writes. In whatever genre Berry chooses to write, he emphasizes nature and place, both its history and culture; the importance of the family farm and of good farming practices; community and obligations to one's neighbors; the respect for local people and a nostalgia for simpler times. He has continued to point out the dangers of industrial farming which he feels has estranged us from the land. We must, he insists, value the land and care for it. While he is skeptical of technology and therefore may be seen as old-fashioned, he shares our contemporary interest in food. He was one of the first who brought to our attention the dangerous separation of the production of food and the preparation and consumption of food. In *Bringing it to the Table* Berry claims "eating is an agricultural act."

Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 1996. (first published in 1977)

_____, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2003.

_____, *Bringing it to the Table: On Farming and Food*. Intro. by Michael Pollan. Berkeley, CA: 2009.

_____, *New Collected Poems*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2013.

_____, *This Day: Collected & New Sabbath Poems*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2014.

_____ and Gary Snyder, *Distant Neighbors: The Selected Letters of Wendell Berry & Gary Snyder*, ed. Chad Winglesworth. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2014.

Annie Dillard (b.1945), writer, educator, naturalist

A graduate of Hollins College in Roanoke, Virginia, Annie Dillard kept a journal in which she recorded her observations and experiments as she explored the Virginia countryside through which flows Tinker Creek. She then worked these observations into what she describes as “a sustained nonfiction narrative about the fields, creeks, woods, and mountains near Roanoke, Virginia.” Others, including Eudora Welty, who reviewed the *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* for *The New York Times Book Review*, describe it as a “meditation” on nature. It was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction in 1975. Popular since its publication in 1974, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* has made many readers see the world in a new way.

Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. New Paperback Edition. New York: Harper Collins, 2013.

IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

From Thoreau through Dillard, these writers all emphasize the importance of place – its history, culture, ecology, beauty. Those of us fortunate enough to live in Adams County, Pennsylvania, know the pleasure of living in a special place and therefore should find Tony Hiss’s *The Experience of Place* particularly interesting.

Tony Hiss, *The Experience of Place: A New Way of Looking at and Dealing With our Radically Changing Cities and Countryside*. New York: Vintage, 2010. (first published in 1991)

LAND TRUSTS/LAND CONSERVANCIES

Even though land trusts go far back in history, not until the 1980s did they begin to become an important instrument for conserving/preserving land. Before then groups or individuals advocated that the government purchase land or establish regulations. For the last thirty years, the primary method for preserving land has come through apolitical and non-confrontational private, non-profit organizations who work with preservation-minded landowners to craft conservation easements which define the preservation of property in perpetuity. Today, according to the Land Trust Alliance, “There are 1,700 land trusts that have more than 100,000 volunteers and 5 million members.”

(www.landtrustalliance.org/land-trusts) For information on land trusts, the land trust movement, the economic benefits of land trusts, and the future of land trusts, see the studies below.

Samuel N. Stokes, A. Elizabeth Watson, Shelley S. Mastran. *Saving America’s Countryside: A Guide to Rural Conservation* (National Trust for Historic Preservation Series). Second Edition. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997.

Richard Brewer, *Conservancy: The Land Trust Movement in America*. New Edition. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2004.

Bill Birchard, *Nature's Keepers: The Remarkable Story of How the Nature Conservancy Became the Largest Environmental Group in the World*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. 2005.

William Ginn. *Investing in Nature: Case Studies of Land Conservation in Collaboration with Business*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2005.

Sally K. Fairfax, Lauren Gwin, Mary Ann King, Leigh Raymond. *Buying Nature: The Limits of Land Acquisition as a Conversation Strategy, 1780-2004* (American and Comparative Environmental Policy). Boston: The MIT Press, 2005.

Thomas R. Wellock, *Preserving the Nation: The Conservation and Environmental Movements 1870-2000*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007.

For more information on Land Trusts or Land Conservancies, explore the websites of the following organizations:

The Nature Conservancy, founded in 1951, www.nature.org

Land Trust Alliance, founded in 1981, www.landtrustalliance.org

The Trust for Public Land, www.tpl.org

The American Farmland Trust, www.farmland.org

World Land Trust, www.worldlandtrust.org

Pennsylvania Land Trust Association, www.conserveland.org

Land Conservancy of Adams County, founded in 1995, www.lcacnet.org