

PH0663751

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED FEB 23 1978  
DATE ENTERED JUL 14 1978

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC Aldo Leopold Shack

AND/OR COMMON

## LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Portions of sections 33 & 34, Publishable location: Sand country  
Town 13 North, Range 7 East of central Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_  
 NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Second

STATE Wisconsin VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_  
CODE 55 COUNTY Sauk/Columbia CODE 111/021

## CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Conservator

## OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Aldo Leopold Sand County Trust, First Wisconsin National Bank, Trustee

STREET & NUMBER 1 South Pinckney Street

CITY, TOWN Madison VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ STATE Wisconsin 53703

## LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTER OF DEEDS, ETC. Register of Deeds, Sauk and Columbia County Courthouses

STREET & NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, TOWN Baraboo & Portage STATE Wisconsin 53913 & 53901

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE 1977  
\_FEDERAL  STATE \_COUNTY \_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN Madison STATE Wisconsin 53706

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT (land)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Aldo Leopold Shack was a cutover, worn out, and abandoned river bottom farm in the sand country of central Wisconsin when Leopold acquired his first parcel in 1935 and began restoring it to ecological integrity. The term "the Shack" is used by the Leopold family to refer to the place; that is, both the land and the cabin.

Ultimately encompassing about 250 acres, including accreted lands along the river, the property was acquired in five parcels between 1935 and 1948, the year of Aldo Leopold's death, with a final purchase in 1970 to gain title to an "island" the family had regarded as theirs all along.

About 120 acres of the property was the homestead of William Henry Baxter, one of the most substantial settlers of the area, who purchased it in 1858 and apparently lived there until about 1895, selling it in 1902. The property passed through several ownerships before being bought in 1915 by Jacob Alexander of Baraboo, a dealer in carriages, wagons, and farm implements. It is unclear who if anyone lived on the land or farmed it.

By the time Leopold leased and then bought the place (c. 80 acres north of the River Road) from Alexander in 1935, the farmhouse had burned to the ground, leaving only a fieldstone foundation. The only buildings were a chicken-house-turned-cowshed (one story rectangle of vertical pine boards with gable roof) and apparently another shed ("carhouse"), both dilapidated and of unknown age. During February-July 1935 the family converted the cowshed into a cabin, repairing the roof, adding a fireplace, clay floor, and windows, apparently substituting a door and window for what had been a large opening on the south side, battening the cracks between the boards, and adding a lean-to bunkhouse on the west side, apparently with wood from the dismantled "carhouse." The following spring the family built an outhouse ("The Parthenon") and a new stone fireplace with a massive sandstone lintel, handhewn cedar log mantel, and buff brick chimney. The only other major alterations came in 1939, when the Leopolds extended the bunkhouse, lined the interior walls and whitewashed them, added a wooden floor on concrete sills, built new bunks with an aisle between, and shingled the roof. All cupboards, shelves, the table and benches are handmade by Leopold or other family members. There is a hand pump in front (south) of the cabin.

The cabin today is essentially as in 1939, except for occasional repairs, especially to the roof, and a new outhouse built around 1970. It is deteriorating badly, however, and the family is considering extensive renovation of foundation, fireplace and chimney, floors, siding, and roof. They are committed to preserving the same general appearance, though there is some question of adding insulation and increasing the depth of the fireplace for greater heating efficiency.

While the building has deteriorated in recent years, the shack land has improved dramatically since 1935 and is in excellent condition today. When Leopold found it, the "island" north and upstream from the cowshed had just been stripped of timber, the corned-out field east of the cowshed was coming up to sand burs and panic grass, the marsh south of the road had apparently burned around 1930, on the hill to the west the sands were bare, and the flood plain forest beyond that had suffered from years of timber cutting and grazing by cattle. From 1936 to 1948 the family made extensive plantings, not only thousands of pines per year but also a host of other trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and prairie grasses. A fairly complete record of plantings and other landscape alterations, together with detailed ecological observations, is included in the "Shack Journals," totaling about 2000 pages.

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Aldo Leopold and various members of his family (wife Estella and five children, ages 8-22 in 1935) visited the Shack from their home in Madison most weekends year-round and occasionally for longer periods, from 1935 to Leopold's death in 1948. From 1948 until Estella Leopold's death in 1975, members of the family and friends often visited the Shack, but they did little planting or other landscape alteration and their recorded observations are far less detailed and systematic.

The Leopold family in 1967 deeded the property to the Aldo Leopold Sand County Trust, which they established in order to provide for maintenance of the property, not only for their own use but as a laboratory for the study of the wildlife and ecology of the area and as a living memorial to Aldo Leopold. Since 1968 the property has been managed as part of the Leopold Memorial Reserve, under the auspices of the Louis Rollin Head Foundation of Madison. The Reserve now includes about 1300 acres encompassing the Leopold lands and contiguous privately owned acreage, most of which Leopold had sought to acquire for himself or for friends as early as 1937. Franklin W. Terbilcox, a land owner on the Reserve employed by the Head Foundation, serves as resident manager, in consultation with other reserve members and a scientific advisory committee.

In 1976, Leopold's daughter Nina and her husband, Dr. Charles Bradley, built a residence-study center about a mile west of the Shack where they now live year-round. They have deeded it to the Head Foundation as a focal point for continued research on the Reserve, where Charles Bradley now serves as director of research. The Leopold family and the Head Foundation also contemplate the establishment of a Leopold Fellowship to support a person who would live and study at the Shack.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1935-1948

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Aldo Leopold

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Aldo Leopold Shack property is most significant as the embodiment of the esthetic perception and wildland husbandry of twentieth century America's perhaps most highly regarded wildlife ecologist and environmental philosopher, Aldo Leopold, and as the setting for many of the essays in his literary classic, A Sand County Almanac. The Shack building in its stark simplicity stands now as a symbol of a new perception of man-land relationship--Aldo Leopold's gift to the future from wisdom acquired here. The British ecologist Sir Frank Fraser Darling on a "pilgrimage" to the Shack in 1950 wrote in the Journal: "Here was the creation of a mind in repose, a mind which could convey something of its own quality to those round him. . . . This once-derelict farm is now a living continuum."

Aldo Leopold (1887-1948) was a respected scientist, instrumental in building ecological foundations for resource management in the U. S. Forest Service, 1909-1928, and then in the profession of wildlife management, of which he was the principal founder. A chair in wildlife management was established for him at the University of Wisconsin in 1933. He published several books and nearly 350 articles and served as officer or consultant for over a hundred professional societies and committees, environmental organizations, agencies, and periodicals. He is best known today as author of A Sand County Almanac (1949), a volume of nature sketches and philosophical essays which represent the distillation of a lifetime of observation, experience, and reflection on the relation of man and land.

Not only the specific settings and incidents but many of the ideas in Sand County Almanac were crystallized from the Shack experience. In particular, Leopold's expression of a land ethic, the key to his environmental philosophy, acquired greater depth and clarity from his husbandry of Shack lands. In addition, several of Leopold's scientific papers were based largely on observations at the Shack, including "A Phenological record for Sauk and Dane Counties, Wisconsin, 1935-1945" (with Sara Elizabeth Jones), Ecological Monographs 17:1 (Jan. 1947), 81-122; and "Avian daybreak and evening song in relation to time and light intensity" (with Alfred E. Eynon), Condor 63:4 (July-Aug. 1961), 269-293. The detailed record of his land management practices and ecological observations in 2000 pages of Shack Journals provides significant baseline data for further ecological research in the area. Finally, the Shack is significant as a prime example of a successful private effort at ecological restoration and continued preservation, initially by Leopold and his family and more recently through the Sand County Trust, the Leopold Memorial Reserve, and the Head Foundation.

The extent of regard for Leopold is indicated by the establishment in 1950 of the Aldo Leopold Memorial Medal as the highest honor bestowed by the Wildlife Society; and by the nomination of Leopold's Sand County Almanac by more than half the distinguished scientists, humanists, and environmental leaders asked in 1973 to suggest titles for an

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 250 (192.18--Official Survey Records--plus accreted lands)

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	28,605,0	4,827,07,5	B	1,6	28,600,0	4,826,00,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,6	28,442,5	4,826,02,5	D	1,6	28,447,5	4,827,10,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Legal description on continuation sheet.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	Wisconsin	CODE	55	COUNTY	Sauk	CODE	111
STATE	Wisconsin	CODE	55	COUNTY	Columbia	CODE	021

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Susan L. Flader, Assoc. Professor of History

16 September 1977

ORGANIZATION

DATE

University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri (on leave 1977-78)

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1819 Keyes Avenue

608/257-1460

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Madison

Wisconsin 53711

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE     

LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Richard Henry*

TITLE Director

DATE

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

10/24/77

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*William Lebowich*

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

7-14-78

7/6/78

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"Environmental Books Hall of Fame," easily outdistancing the nearest rivals, Silent Spring and Walden. The book in several editions has sold around a million copies.

The Aldo Leopold Shack undoubtedly ranks in significance with Walden Pond, but with a crucial difference--unlike Walden Pond, it retains its full integrity. The Leopold family is acutely conscious of the need to maintain the continuum through their personal involvement in the life of the land to the extent feasible and through ecological research and sensitive management. They do not want the Shack to become a tourist attraction, in the manner of Walden Pond, for fear of destroying essential components of its integrity such as its isolation and its relatively undisturbed wildlife and plants. Hence the property is not open to the public and the family requests that no indication of the location be published.

The Leopold Shack is a setting in geologic time. Aldo Leopold was profoundly conscious of its history and humbled by his role in its evolution. In his view, the entire history of the land, natural and human, past and future, was significant. For purposes of this nomination, however, the significant period is clearly 1935-1948, the years of Leopold's stewardship. Although this period does not quite meet the 50-year criterion for inclusion in the National Register, the pre-eminence of Aldo Leopold and the exceptional importance of the Shack as the site most closely associated with his life and work qualifies the Shack for serious consideration.

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- Leopold, Aldo, et al., Shack Journals, 3 vols., 1935-1948; 1 vol., 1948f; and correspondence files; in Aldo Leopold Papers, University of Wisconsin Archives.
- Leopold, A. Carl, Journals, 1934f, at Bradley Study Center, Leopold Memorial Reserve.
- Land records, Sauk County Courthouse and Sauk County Title Company, Baraboo.
- Interviews with Nina Leopold Bradley, Estella B. Leopold, and Franklin W. Terbilcox, September 1977.
- Flader, Susan (with Charles Steinhacker, photographer), The Sand Country of Aldo Leopold (New York: Sierra Club Books/Scribners, 1973).
- Flader, Susan L. Thinking Like a Mountain: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of an Ecological Attitude Toward Deer, Wolves, and Forests (Columbia, Mo., 1974).
- Fleming, Donald, "Roots of the New Conservation Movement," Perspectives in American History, 6 (1972), 7-91.
- Friends of the Earth, Not Man Apart (Nov., 1973).
- Bradley, Nina Leopold, "Afterword," in A Sand County Almanac (Madison: Tamarack Press, 1977).

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Legal Boundary Description

The following parcels of land all located in Town 13 North, Range 7 East, Town of Fairfield, Sauk County, Wisconsin:

Commencing at the north west (NW) corner of fraction three (3) in Section number thirty-three (33) running thence south along the subdivision line, as per the Government survey to the center of a certain creek, known as Newells Creek, thence east along the center of said creek, thirty-two (32) rods, thence north parallel with the western boundary, to the north end of said fraction, No. three (3), thence west along the northern boundary of said fraction three, to the place of beginning.

Also a parcel of land described as follows: Commencing at a point in the thread of the Wisconsin River thirty-two (32) rods east of the west boundary line of the east half of section thirty-three (33) thence south to the creek known as Newells Creek, thence east along said creek thirty-two (32) rods, thence directly north to the thread of said river, thence along the thread of said river as the northern boundary line to the place of beginning.

The South thirty-eight (38) acres of the West fifty (50) acres of Lot Three (3), Section Thirty-three (33), Township Thirteen (13) North, of Range Seven (7) East.

The East fourteen (14) rods of Lot Number Three (3), and all of Lot Number Four (4), lying North of highway in Section Number Thirty-three (33).

Lots Number One (1) and Two (2) lying North of highway running East and West known as River Road in Section Number Thirty-four (34).

All of that part of the following described piece of land lying south of the highway; lots One (1) and Two (2) except that lying south of Chapman's Lake and south of ditch running from said lake to South line of said Lots, Section Thirty-four (34).

The following parcel of land located in Town 13 North of Range 7 East, Columbia County, Wisconsin:

Government Lot 8, Section 33.

Note: The Sauk-Columbia County boundaries as shown on the U.S.G.S. quadrangle are inexact, generally following the center of the Wisconsin River. Boundaries shown on the aerial photograph are accurate, as borne out by land records in the Sauk and Columbia County courthouses.



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Donald N. Anderson, Historian & Registrar, Historic Preservation Division

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

20 September 1977

816 State Street

608/262-0746

Madison

Wisconsin 53706