



Conservationist supplemental insert

Champions of Conservation



**NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**
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Champions of Conservation

Armed with lightweight binoculars, digital cameras, easy-to-use field guides and good roads that can carry us and our gear to remote areas, we take for granted today how simple it is to access and enjoy the natural world.



We need to pause from time to time to pay tribute to those whose dedicated hard work make our outdoor adventures more enjoyable, if not downright possible. One hundred fifty years ago, John Burroughs struggled with the technical botany and bird books to attach names to the creatures he had come to love in his Hudson Valley and Catskill haunts. With seemingly inexhaustible natural resources to the West, little thought was given to conservation and a land ethic had yet to be formulated.

Printed here are descriptions of a few of our favorite conservation heroes and heroines. Some were pioneers in describing the richly diverse relationships among living things. Through words or pictures, others shared their knowledge and in turn got us excited. Some developed quiet but powerful philosophies on how we might better understand and care for our wildlife legacy. Through their patient persistence or political power, still others helped set aside special places and taught us how to better care for them.

Without the influence of these and others like them, we would have inherited a very different world.

**Text by Frank Knight and Eileen Stegemann
Illustrations by Matt Forsyth**

Theodore Roosevelt
1858-1919



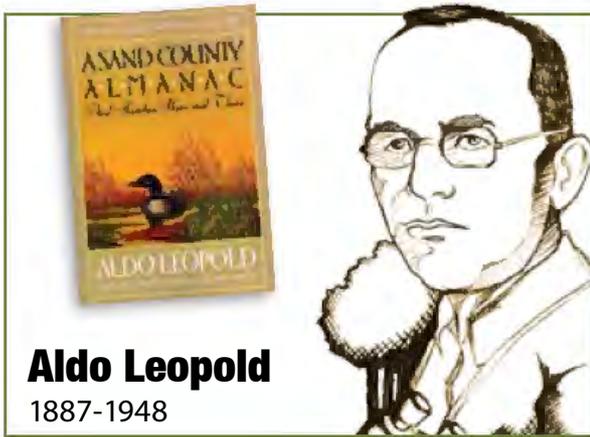
An avid outdoorsman, esteemed naturalist and staunch conservationist, Teddy Roosevelt's reputation in politics was as a progressive reformer. Roosevelt was the youngest man ever to serve as President of the United States. When he assumed the presidency after the assassination of McKinley in 1901, he began to institute vigorous conservation measures. His work propelled the conservation movement forward into the public conscience.

During his tenure as president, he established the U.S. Forest Service (1905), created 150 National Forests, established 51 federal bird sanctuaries, and started huge irrigation projects.

Roosevelt also signed legislation establishing five national parks and 18 national game preserves. In addition, he protected a large portion of the Grand Canyon and established 18 national monuments. He laid the groundwork for what would become the National Park Service.

Teddy Roosevelt summed up his conservation philosophy with these words:

"I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use the nature resources of our land; but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us."



Aldo Leopold

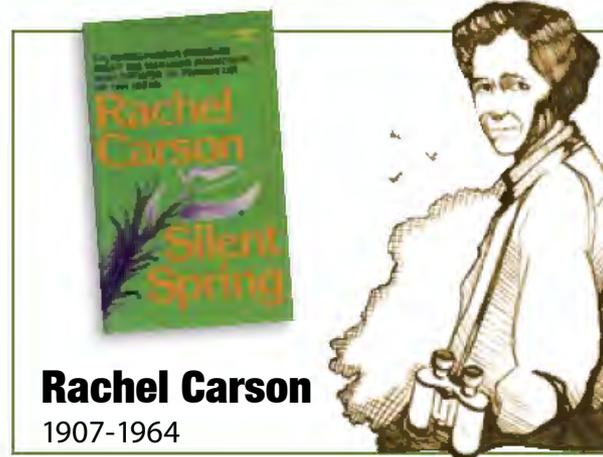
1887-1948

Considered the father of wildlife ecology, Aldo Leopold was among America's first professional foresters and helped found the National Wildlife Federation and the Wilderness Society.

Leopold grew up in rural Iowa, where he developed his love for the outdoors. Graduating from the Yale School of Forestry in 1909, he began a career with the U.S. Forest Service in New Mexico. In 1924 he headed north to become assistant director of the Forest Products Laboratory in Wisconsin, which he quit to do independent contract work on wildlife and game surveys. His textbook, *Game Management*, led him to become the nation's first professor of Game Management at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1933.

The wildlife ethic Leopold espoused was shared in his famous *Sand County Almanac*, published shortly after his death. In it he decried the resource exploitation that results from our traditional views on land ownership: "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."

Read by millions, his writings spurred the environmental movement as well as nurtured a widespread interest in ecology.



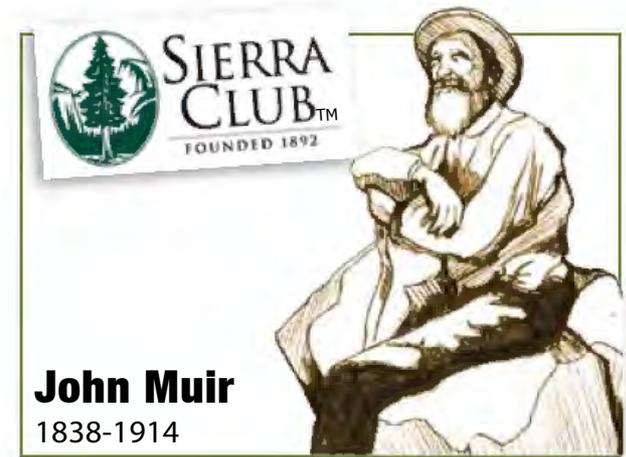
Rachel Carson

1907-1964

Rachel Carson was an accomplished scientist and writer whose ability to combine scientific facts with poetic prose created popular works that made her a spokesperson for conservation. Published in 1962, her book *Silent Spring* became the symbol of the new environmental movement by alerting the public to the hazards of pesticide misuse and spurring thousands of Americans into action.

Rachel grew up to study marine biology and earned a master's degree in biology at Johns Hopkins University. Looking to combine her love of science and literature, she began writing radio scripts for the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries before moving on to become a scientist and editor for the Fish and Wildlife Service, and eventually becoming Editor-in-Chief for all their publications.

Following the release of *Silent Spring*, Carson was attacked as an alarmist by those she criticized. However, she won public opinion by continuing to speak out and remind us that we are subject to the same damage as other life in the ecosystem. Before succumbing to cancer in 1964, she went before Congress to call for new policies to protect human health and the environment.



John Muir

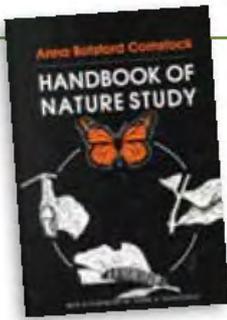
1838-1914

Born in Scotland and raised on a Wisconsin farm, John Muir's love of gadgetry and his many homemade inventions, such as an alarm clock bed that stood him on his feet, led him to the University of Wisconsin and a career as an industrial engineer. However, a factory accident nearly cost him his eyesight, and Muir redirected his focus to the outdoors.

In 1867, Muir walked a thousand miles from Indiana to Florida. Moving on to California, he visited Yosemite Valley and took a summer job designing and operating a water-powered sawmill. While there, Muir studied Yosemite's geologic formation, arguing correctly that it was glacial erosion that created the area, and not a catastrophic earthquake as previously thought.

Muir became an ardent preservationist for the Sierra Mountains and helped found the Sierra Club in 1892, becoming its first president. His first of many books, *The Mountains of California*, was published in 1894. In 1903, Muir convinced President Theodore Roosevelt, who was on a tour of Yosemite, that the park needed federal control and management, and in 1905, Congress agreed and designated it a national park.

Muir's legacy lives on in the Sierra Club and his books, as well as several woods, trails, mountains, and a glacier that bear his name.



Anna Botsford Comstock

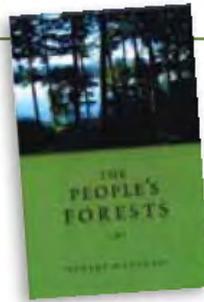
1854 -1930

Anna Botsford Comstock is often thought of as the mother of nature education. A graduate of Cornell, she went on to be the university's first female professor, teaching nature study. She married Henry Comstock, a young entomology professor at Cornell, and throughout her career illustrated her husband's insect publications and books. Together, they founded the Comstock Publishing Company to produce their books.

Anna felt strongly that instructors should take students outside to learn. She became a pioneering advocate for outdoor nature study for elementary school students and developed a course of study for outdoor learning. The first of its kind in the nation, the program was approved by the New York State Education Department, and it eventually grew into a nationwide effort administered by some colleges, including Cornell.

In 1911, she published her famous 900-page *Handbook of Nature Study* which ultimately was translated into eight languages and is still in print today. The book covers a wide variety of plants and animals and emphasizes learning through direct observation.

In 1923, she was nominated by the League of Women Voters as one of America's greatest women. In 1988, she was installed into the National Wildlife Federation's Conservation Hall of Fame.



Bob Marshall

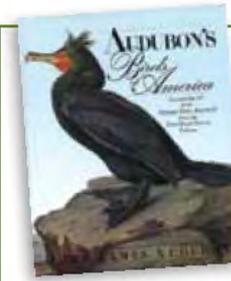
1901-1939

Known as an ardent wilderness advocate, Bob Marshall spent much of his adult life exploring the nation's wild lands. Born into a wealthy family, he spent summers at the family camp on Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks. Marshall's father, a successful lawyer, loved the Adirondacks and helped secure the "forever wild" designation for the Adirondack and Catskill Parks.

Adopting his father's love of the Adirondacks, Marshall was one of the first 46ers, climbing all 46 peaks over 4,000 feet. His mountain adventures shaped his love for wilderness. He graduated from the state College of Forestry, and began writing articles advocating forest preservation instead of timber exploitation. He worked for the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and compiled a list of 38 large, roadless forest tracts he felt should be preserved. In his book *The People's Forest*, he urged the nationalization of timberlands to save them from corporate logging, and recommended preserving woodlands to provide an escape from a crowded world.

In 1935, Marshall worked with other conservationists to form The Wilderness Society.

One of the last great, unbroken stretches of wildlife habitat in the contiguous U.S., the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area in the Montana Rockies is a living monument to this man. For further reading, see "Wilderness Advocate" in the August 2007 *Conservationist*.



John James Audubon

1785-1851

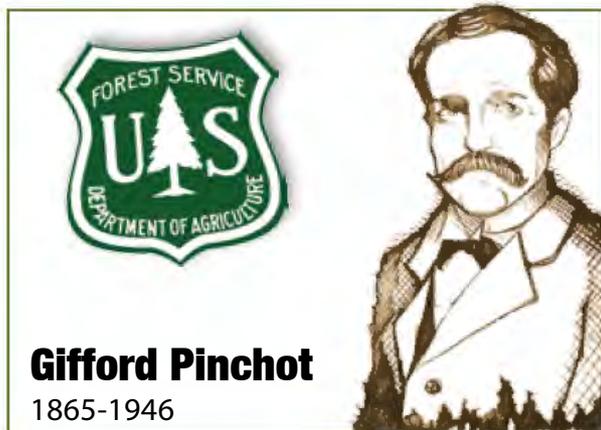
Remembered as the father of American ornithology, John James Audubon was a naturalist and artist whose lifelike drawings of birds helped change people's attitudes toward wildlife, inspiring many to consider the need for conservation of our natural resources.

Originally from the Caribbean, he studied art in Paris and left for America in 1803 to oversee a family farm near Philadelphia. There he began studying natural history, and conducted the first bird banding on this continent.

Deciding to paint all of North America's birds, Audubon set off down the Mississippi with canvas and paintbox. During his travels, he produced more than 1,000 drawings, often incorporating accurate natural habitat backgrounds that made his paintings more realistic.

Finding it difficult to interest Americans in his work, Audubon went to England in 1826 where he was able to raise enough money to publish the first in his famous seven-volume set *Birds of America*. Containing 435 life-sized hand-colored plates, the volumes are considered by many to be some of the greatest picture books ever produced.

Audubon's work inspired the National Audubon Society, which was founded and named in his honor in 1905.



Gifford Pinchot

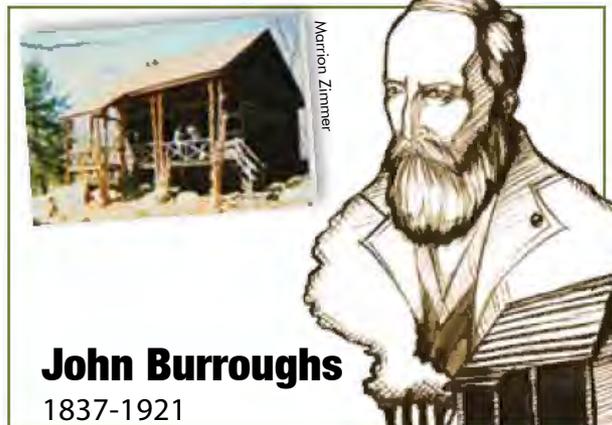
1865-1946

Gifford Pinchot was America's first professional forester. Born to a privileged family in Connecticut, he decided at an early age to become a forester. However, at that time there was no official forestry curriculum in America, so after graduating from Yale he went to France to study forestry.

As a pioneer forester, Pinchot campaigned for preservation of our forests through managed use. He coined the term conservation as "the careful husbanding of resources for wise use by humans," and helped found the Yale School of Forestry where he was a professor for many years. A member of the National Forest Commission, he toured the west in 1896 to consider forest areas for preservation.

Pinchot was primarily responsible for founding the U.S. Forest Service. A friend of Teddy Roosevelt's, he was made chief, a role he held from 1905 to 1910. During his tenure, he doubled the number and acreage of national forests. After leaving federal service, he was elected to two terms as governor of Pennsylvania.

Advocating that "Conservation means the greatest good to the greatest number for the longest time," Pinchot greatly influenced the conservation movement.

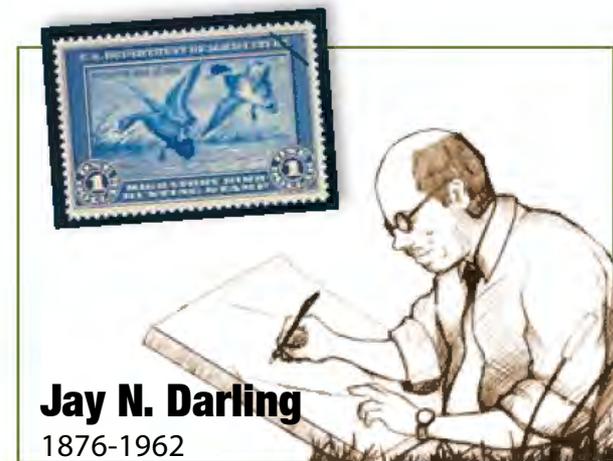


John Burroughs

1837-1921

Hailed as the father of the American nature essay, Hudson Valley naturalist John Burroughs produced 23 volumes of nature essays. Many of his essays first appeared in popular periodicals of the day, and his work was immensely popular as it connected city dwellers with the great outdoors. He was greatly influenced by Whitman, Emerson, and Thoreau, and his simple and honest style made his writings favorites in the classroom.

Burroughs began writing during the Civil War when he took a job with the U.S. Treasury in Washington, D.C. Homesick in the underground vault, he wrote about his childhood experiences of growing up on a dairy farm in Delaware County, NY. After the war, he built a house overlooking the Hudson River, near West Park, where he continued writing. As his fame grew, so did his influence over the direction of the early environmental movement. Many personalities, including Harvey Firestone, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, John Muir and Teddy Roosevelt, visited with him at his nearby cabin retreat, which he named "Slabsides."



Jay N. Darling

1876-1962

Born in Michigan and educated in Wisconsin, "Ding" (a contraction of his last name) was a gifted cartoonist and dedicated conservationist. His editorial cartoons enlightened the public to serious issues and earned him two Pulitzer Prizes, in 1924 and 1943.

Worried about the loss of wildlife habitat and possible extinction of wildlife species, Darling used his cartoons to convey his concerns and became an important figure in the conservation movement. In 1934, President Roosevelt appointed him head of the U.S. Biological Survey, forerunner to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. During his tenure, three million acres of public land were set aside for wildlife refuges. He also championed and designed the first Federal Duck Stamp, which donated one dollar toward the purchase of bird refuges for each stamp sold.

Darling was a key player in passage of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937. Also known as the Pittman-Robertson Act, this important legislation earmarked the proceeds from a tax on sporting firearms and ammunition to be used by the states for wildlife restoration.

Ding was a founder of the National Wildlife Federation and is commemorated by the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island in Florida.