

FTY 112 / ESP 112 – Forests Through Time: Discussions

Assignment for Week 5-6: 30 pt

Due Tuesday, February 26, 2008

The point value for each question is indicated in parentheses. Points are given for proper usage of information from the recorded lectures and readings, approximately 1 point per information item. Extra credit is possible by providing more information than expected.

Read the following quote from Aldo Leopold:

“In short, the reaction of land to occupancy determines the nature and duration of civilization. In arid climates the land may be destroyed. In all climates the plant succession determines what economic activities can be supported [by natural systems]. Their nature and intensity [interaction between occupancy and plant succession] in turn determine not only domestic but also the wild plant and animal life, the scenery, and the whole face of nature. We inherit the earth, but within the limits of the soil and plant succession we also rebuild the earth.”

Explain why this statement is true. Consider possible impacts of “occupancy” on soil and native plants. (15 pt)

Read the following quote from Aldo Leopold:

“It is astonishing how few of those who have learned, by rote rule or “nature study,” the *statics* of the land’s present inhabitants or condition, ever learn to read the *dynamics* of its past history and probable future. To see merely what a [forest] is or has is to see nothing. To see why it is, how it *became*, and the direction and velocity of its changes – this is the great drama of the land, to which “educated” people too often turn an unseeing eye and a deaf ear. The stumps in a woodlot, the species age and form of fence-row trees, the plow-furrows in a reverted field, the location and age of an old orchard, ... the age of the trees or bushes in a gully, the fire-scars on a sawlog – these and a thousand other roadside objects spell out words of history, and of destiny, of game [wildlife] and of peoples. They are the final authority on the history of the recent past and the trend of the immediate future.”

Explain and justify the last sentence of the quote. (15 pt)