

EPISODE
CLOSED CAPTION
SCRIPT



SEARCHING FOR SUSTAINABILITY
FARMING PRACTICES
AND SUSTAINABILITY

Buddy Huffaker - Not just for humanity's sake but for all those other life-forms as well. As we think about sustainability in the 21st century, we need to remember that this is not a new issue, this dates back generations, basically eons, as early as the 1930s. Aldo Leopold, wrote that the oldest task in human history is to live on a piece of land without spoiling it then seeing the impact of the dust bowl and the drought and what human beings could do to degrade the landscape and hurt their own economies their own livelihoods, that was deeply troubling to him and that was part of the impetus to write his book. It was back in the 1940s when Aldo Leopold wrote, "We abused land because we see 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".

Margaret Krome - So, Aldo Leopold, he didn't talk about sustainability, using that terminology, but really what he was talking about with the land ethic is protecting the land, understanding our stewardship obligations to the land for our sake and for the sake of the ecosystem on which we depend.

Buddy Huffaker - When Leopold was writing the Sand County Almanac, we have to remember the world looked a lot different. There were only a couple billion people at that time, now were approaching eight billion people. People had a much closer connection to the land than they do now. Most of the population in the United States were farmers who lived in the rural landscape, so they truly did rely on the land for their sustenance and for their livelihood.

Dave Vetrano - When Aldo Leopold wrote about this area things were clearly out of balance. At the time of settlement, this was a tall grass prairie in oak savanna but after agriculture became the industry in the late 1800s things started to happen. The technology that the farmers brought with them from northern Europe, while perfectly appropriate for northern Europe, were not sustainable here in southwest Wisconsin so within a relatively short time massive amounts of soil erosion occurred because of over grazing on the hillsides and up and down cropping on the ridge tops into the bottom.

Jim Munsch - After all, Wisconsin was a huge wheat producer, way back in the 1800" s. The Europeans were the ones that brought that here. In Europe, that is not a problem because they have very gentle steady rains. Over here, that same production model was just a killer on our soils. If that wheat weren't up to hold the soil, and a two-inch rain came, which is not unusual in our area, they had huge erosion. They looked at this erosion not as a loss of soil, but they looked at it as a ditch creator around which it was very difficult to farm

Dave Vetrano - You're looking at 12 to 15 feet of sediment that eroded off the hill sides and filled in the valley floor. Virtually all the ground on both sides of this stream bank is topsoil that 200 years ago was up on the ridgetop.