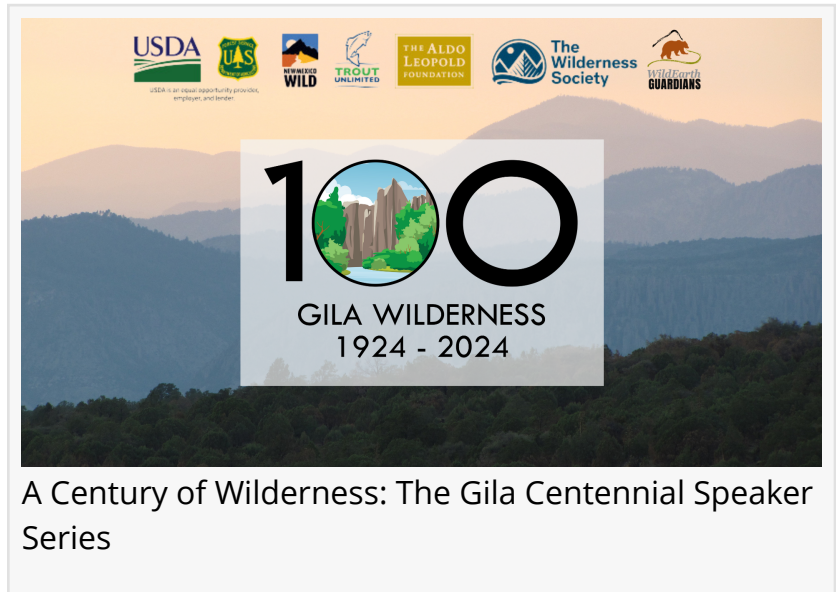


# Charting the Next Century: Gila Wilderness Centennial Speaker Series Event Invites Public Dialogue on this Sacred Place

*Online Simulcast Included*

BARABOO, WI, UNITED STATES, April 17, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- An upcoming speaker series will examine designated wilderness from diverse perspectives using the example of our nation's first—the [Gila Wilderness](#)—which turns 100 this year. This event will take place in Silver City, New Mexico, on May 31 and will be simulcast live through the [Aldo Leopold Foundation](#). Register for the simulcast at <https://www.crowdcast.io/c/gilacentennial>



A Century of Wilderness: The Gila Centennial Speaker Series

In 1924, the [U.S. Forest Service](#) accepted a proposal that would forever impact conservation on the American landscape: the designation of the Gila Wilderness. The rugged headwaters of the Gila River, with more than 750,000 acres of mountains, rivers, and forest, were designated at the recommendation of a young U. S. Forest Service forester, Aldo Leopold, who went on to be one of the leading conservationists of the 20th century. In 1921, Leopold wrote of the Gila River headwaters, “It is the last typical wilderness in the southwestern mountains. Highest use demands its preservation.” Today, the Gila is a healthy ecosystem. It supports exemplary outdoor recreation, environmental research, and connection with the natural world, but it is also a place of complicated

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Begin to look at the whole landscape and understand we live in places that cover the range from the most human-dominated urban spaces to the most intact wild spaces.”

*Dr. Curt Meine, biographer of Aldo Leopold*

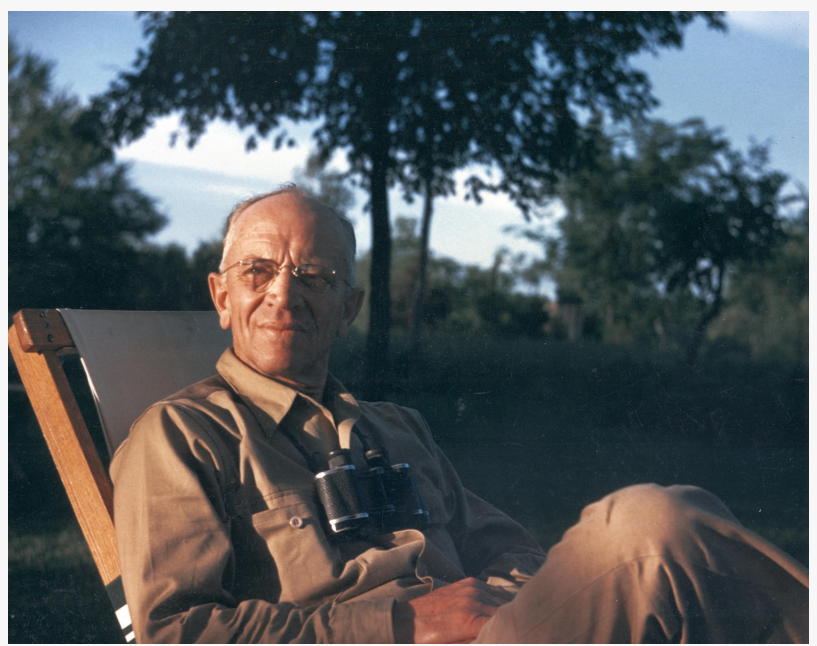
relationships between cultures and land.

The history of the Gila is a microcosm of a long-standing debate: what is wilderness? Does

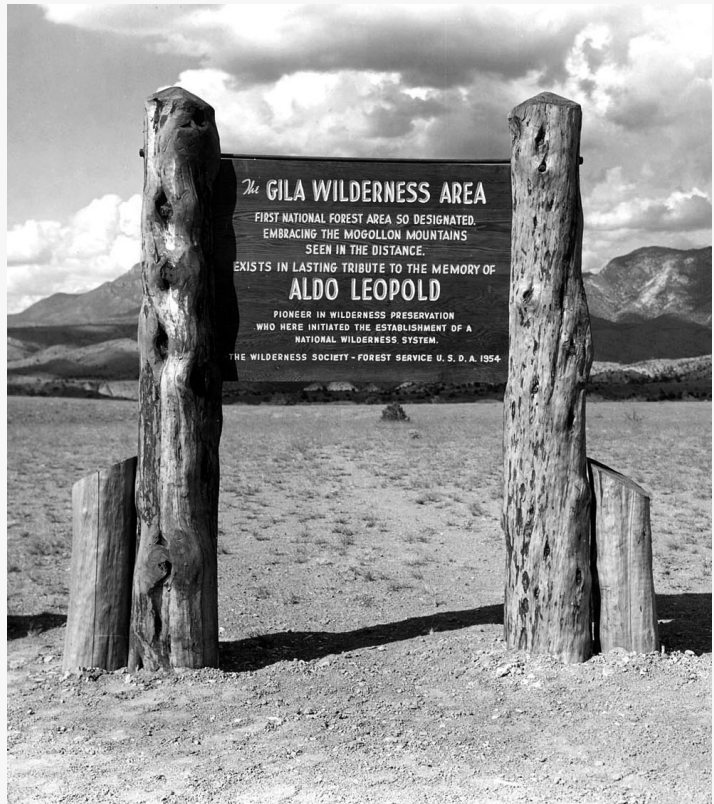
wilderness even exist in the way that Aldo Leopold imagined? When additional voices are included, namely those of Indigenous cultures that have lived in the region for thousands of years, how is the conversation reframed? These questions are central to the upcoming Gila Centennial speaker series in Silver City, New Mexico. The speaker series will give space to the multitude of wilderness perspectives and the diversity of relationships people have with the Gila. The speaker series represents a collaboration between the Aldo Leopold Foundation, Continental Divide Trail Coalition, New Mexico Wild, The Wilderness Society, Trout Unlimited, United States Forest Service, WildEarth Guardians, and invited speakers.

The May 31 event begins with Dr. Curt Meine, a biographer of Aldo Leopold, who offers this challenge, "Begin to look at the whole landscape and understand we live in places that cover the range from the most human-dominated urban spaces to the most intact wild spaces. And, we can ask ourselves what our whole landscapes need to be more resilient, diverse, beautiful, and just, especially in times of rapid social and environmental change." The speaker series will attempt to address this challenge through the lens of the Gila Wilderness.

Speakers include Dr. Curt Meine, Aldo Leopold Biographer, Aldo Leopold Foundation; Leeanna Torres, Nuevamexicana Writer; Dr. Priscilla Solis Ybarra, Writer and Assistant Professor of Latina/o literature, University of North Texas; Teresa Pascal, Historic Preservation Office, Acoma Pueblo; Mark Thompson, Fmr. Lieutenant Governor, Acoma Pueblo; Michael Darrow, Historian,



Aldo Leopold



The Gila Wilderness, U.S. Forest Service

Fort Sill Apache; Ray Trejo, Luna County Commissioner, among others.

The speaker series on May 31 will feature diverse perspectives through presentations followed by panel discussions from 9:00 am-12:00 pm and 1:00 pm-3:00 pm at the Silco Theatre and from 6:00 pm-8:00 pm at the Convention Center in Silver City, New Mexico. All times are Mountain Standard Time (MST). These in-person presentations and panels will be simulcast online through the Aldo Leopold Foundation's simulcast page <https://www.crowdcast.io/c/gilacentennial>. You must register for the simulcast. All events, in-person and simulcast, are free of charge.

Additional events commemorating the centennial of the Gila Wilderness are taking place throughout the months of April, May, and June. Other events within the speaker series are in-person only in Silver City and include community conversations on hunting recreation on Wednesday, May 29th, and nature photography on Thursday, May 30th. On Saturday, June 1, 2024, there will be a commemorative event at Gough Park in Silver City with federal, state, and local dignitaries. Invited speakers for this commemorative event include Chief Randy Moore, US Forest Service; Senator Martin Heinrich; and Secretary Deb Haaland, US Department of the Interior. For a full list of events and details, visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gila/learning/history-culture/?cid=fseprd1103416>

High-Resolution Cover Photo:

For the cover photo of A Sand County Almanac, 2024 New Edition, please contact Grayce McCormick: [lightfinderpr@gmail.com](mailto:lightfinderpr@gmail.com)

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Additional Information:

For more information, please visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gila/learning/history-culture/?cid=fseprd1103416>

Note to Editors: The Aldo Leopold Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting Aldo Leopold's land ethic and fostering care for the land and community. For more information, visit [www.aldoleopold.org](http://www.aldoleopold.org)

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