

## Quotes from Sigurd Olson (1899-1982)

"In 1916, 1917, and 1918, I'd canoed all around Ashland, and used to keep a canoe down at the waterfront near Fish Creek Slough. Sometimes, I would canoe out to Long Island at the head of Chequamegon Bay. I also used to canoe the White River, the Bois Brule, and the Namekagon. At that time, the Namekagon was boiling with brook trout. Nowadays you hardly catch a brook; they're all browns. Eventually I went to the Quetico-Superior in 1920 after graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I taught high school in Nashwauk, Minnesota, a small mining town in the northeast corner of the state, and spent my free time exploring rivers and lakes around the area. I immediately fell in love with this country, and decided 'Here's where I'm going to live!'

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"In 1926, wilderness was a growing concept for me. I gradually became aware of its importance to posterity. And I gradually became aware of developing a spiritual relationship to land as Native Americans did and have done for centuries. So when it comes to the matter of wilderness, wilderness being what the land originally was before we desecrated it, we are trying to preserve the purity of the land as God intended it for our spiritual welfare as well as for our psychological well-being. We belong to the land and we cannot divorce ourselves from it. When you divorce yourself from the land, you cut your roots. Those who cut their roots are lost souls, and the world is full of them grasping, looking desperately for something to hold on to."

Quotes are from an interview by author, Sumner Matteson, printed in *AFIELD, Portraits of Wisconsin Naturalists, Empowering Leopold's Legacy* (Little Creek Press, January 2020; [littlecreekpress.com](http://littlecreekpress.com)).

