That is the value of the eco-cultural conference called The Geography of Hope: it bends our consciousness and refreshes our lexicon. My colleagues at Oregon’s H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest call it “re-story-ation.” Before we make new policies, we need new metaphors. It is the reason writers and artists play a crucial role in conservation history. Where would the movement be without the literary talents of Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, Stegner, and Carson?

Aldo Leopold inspired the 2013 Geography of Hope conference; the visage of Rachel Carson overlooked our gathering this year. The theme was Women and the Land, and at the close of the gathering, as a way of mapping our “new geography of hope,” on a
Steve Dunsky is a documentary filmmaker for the U.S. Forest Service. He co-directed the documentary Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time, which was co-produced by the Center for Humans and Nature, the Aldo Leopold Foundation, and the U.S. Forest Service.

The biennial conference, Geography of Hope, sponsored and hosted by Point Reyes Books, brings together leading writers and activists in the coastal village of Point Reyes Station, California, for a three-day feast of readings, discussions, and activities to inspire and deepen an understanding of the relationships between people and place. This year the Center for Humans and Nature was a co-sponsor of the conference. For more information about the Geography of Hope conference please visit the Point Reyes Books website. A slightly different version of this article appeared in Orion Magazine as part of the Orion Noteworthy blog series: https://orionmagazine.org/category/blog/orion-noteworthy/