

## ***Restoration Ecocriticism***

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One of my research interests is the land restoration legacy of conservationist, wildlife ecologist, and nature writer Aldo Leopold. Over the years, my interest in actual land restoration practices both at the Leopold lands in Wisconsin and at the Land Ethic Center that I have founded at Hacettepe University, Ankara, has inspired me to search for land restoration stories in environmental texts—both fiction and nonfiction. Restoration ecocriticism that I set forth more than a decade ago is now even more timely as 2021–30 is announced to be the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. “There has never been a more urgent need to revive damaged ecosystems than now,” reads a headline on their website (see <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/>). With my work, I hope to inspire the ecocritical study of texts that include hands-on restoration of damaged lands and bring “restoration ecocriticism” to the attention of ecocritical circles, as a new edition to the expansive field of ecocriticism.

There are quite a few narratives of hands-on land and species restoration in literary texts. From Jean Giono’s *The Man Who Planted Trees* to Freeman House’s *Totem Salmon: Life Lessons from Another Species* and Scott Freeman’s *Saving Tarboo Creek: One Family’s Quest to Heal the Land*, literature from around the world features such texts. How can this potential ecocritical school help communities around the world to develop a sense of stewardship and responsibility for land and its nonhuman inhabitants with engagements in hands-on restoration? This new ecocritical approach may trigger new creative and critical writing on the local environments where there is need for ecological restoration. In the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the literature scholar will have a say in creating resilient lands by triggering restoration work, with narratives of communities making a difference and changing the world.

My RCC project is to expand and complete my studies on restoration ecocriticism and publish the first edited collection comprising “land restoration in literature” (both fiction and nonfiction). This approach to revisit literary and cultural texts may become one of the means to raise awareness and to mobilize community involvement for landscape-scale Earth repair.