

**Rachel Carson  
Intergenerational**

*Sense of Wonder-  
Sense of the Wild*

**Contest 2016**





# Rachel Carson Intergenerational Sense of Wonder/Wild Contest 2016

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## 1. Introduction to the Contest

The Intergenerational Sense of Wonder/Sense of the Wild Contest sponsored by Rachel Carson Landmark Alliance (RCLA) is a great way for you (as a child or as an adult, in an intergenerational team) to express an appreciation for nature, with a chance of winning for your team. Contest rules are the same as those used in 2015. Deadline for entries is November 1, 2016. Winners will be announced by December 1, 2016. We encourage teachers to use this contest as a class project. Contact RCLA for suggestions.

Each 2016 Contest Entry is required to:

- Be from an intergenerational team — representing the combined effort of at least 2 contestants from 2 different generations (the contestants can be related or not related)
- Show your appreciation for Nature
- Choose as a theme either: (A) The Sense of Wonder or (B) The Sense of Wonder/Sense of the Wild
- Choose as a way of expressing your appreciation for Nature, one of the following 6 categories: essay, poem, photo, art work, song/dance, or mixed media
- Be accompanied by the Official Contest Entry Form for 2016

## 2. Inspiration for the Contest:

The Contest is inspired by Rachel Carson's writings (her book *The Sense of Wonder* and the last chapter of her book *Silent Spring*, titled, "The Other Road").

*The Sense of Wonder* (a short, easy read — recommended for all adults) is where Rachel Carson shares her own appreciation for Nature and her belief that all people have within them the potential for appreciating and drawing inspiration from the beauty of Nature, and also that people from different generations can benefit from sharing experiences of Nature's wonders.

In "The Other Road" as well as in other parts of *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson writes about the benefits to us from Nature's services. These services work best when plants and animals exist in wild areas such as: a forest, a stream, or a meadow. Rachel Carson writes that the pollinators, including wild bees depend on such weeds as goldenrod, mustard and dandelions for pollen as food for their young. She writes that beneficial insects such as dragonflies, lady bugs and spiders can be our allies by helping to control pest insects such as mosquitoes, aphids and biting flies.

## 3. Contest Themes and Categories

### A) Contest Themes

#### 1) Sense of Wonder

Entries in this category must express the sense of wonder from Nature that team members share a beautiful, fun, or exciting experience. It can be found as close as one's backyard or as distant as the night sky. It can include the sound of wind, the call of a bird or the chorus of wood frogs. It can be the smell of a pine woods, the scent of lavender or the aroma from a mint leaf crushed between your fingers. When we teach our eyes, ears and other senses to focus on the wonders of Nature, we open ourselves up to delightful discoveries all around us.

#### 2) Sense of Wonder/Sense of the Wild

This refers to Rachel Carson's message about the positive value of wildlife (plants and animals in their natural settings) — due in part to the services that they provide for humans and other inhabitants of the planet. These activities make possible survival of their species as well as ours. Details about the number and types of Nature's services have increased from Carson's day, as scientists learn more about the ways in which wildlife are valuable to us. Here are a few examples:

- Dragonflies help control mosquito populations
- Oak trees support over 500 species of butterflies and moths, the caterpillars of which can feed migratory birds and their young



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- Oysters in the Chesapeake Bay can help keep the water clear — if large numbers are not dredged up for food. (Taking unlimited quantities of oysters for the marketplace, or maintaining them in the Bay to clean the water, is a choice facing regulators and legislators.)
- Wild bees can be important pollinators of crops such as apples, cherries, plums, almonds, blueberries and alfalfa. Most of these bees do not live in colonies but are solitary, living in the ground, in tree cavities or in hollow plant stems.
- Plants can produce safe food for bees, beneficial insects, birds, and ourselves if they have healthy soil, clean water, favorable climate, fresh air and sunlight. Wildlife working in ecosystems help to generate most of these conditions. Humans and all living things benefit from their work.

## **B. Contest Categories**

For each theme there are 6 possible categories: essay, poem, photo, art work, song/dance, or mixed media. Each team must choose 1 category. Experienced and first-time dancers, artists, and videomakers are encouraged to participate.

- 1) Poem Entries:** the maximum length is 500 words or 2 pages
- 2) Essay Entries:** the maximum length is 500 words or 2 pages
- 3) Photograph Entries:** There is no size limit but please send one photo per team. Please send your photo entry electronically as a .JPG file, minimum 300 ppi, size 100%, attached to an e-mail to: rachelcarsonlandmark@verizon.net.
- 4) Art Work:** Submissions should be in the form of a photo, accompanied by the Official Contest Entry Form.
- 5) Song/Dance Entries:** Videos should be a maximum of 4 minutes. (Dance video entries can be but are not limited to the moving body. You can use live performers and/or capture movement and change visible in Nature, such as birds landing, trees shaking in a storm, or a river flowing. You might capture the sense of wonder in Nature, in your own backyard, in a favorite spot in your community, or in a place to which you have traveled for an outdoor adventure.) To submit a video, please post it to your own YouTube channel and then send us an e-mail indicating your name and the video's web address to: rachelcarsonlandmark@verizon.net.
- 6) Mixed Media:** This could be a photo and a poem or other combinations from two different categories.

## **4. Contestants/Intergenerational Team Members**

Entries must be submitted from an intergenerational team of two or more persons who are not the same age — a young person and an older person. Team members can be relatives or not. Ages of all contestants must be listed on the Official 2016 Entry Form. Team members can be from the US or from outside the U.S. Entries are to be accompanied by the Official 2016 Entry Form.

Team members of winning entries listed on the RCLA web site will be identified only by first names and ages (optional). The team will retain rights to use the submission for other purposes. If your submission includes work created by another person — for example copyrighted music or images — you may need to obtain permission to do so if your entry is declared a winner and picked to be shown, in whole or in part, on the RCLA website.

## **5. Criteria for Judging Entries/ What Winners Receive**

The criteria on which the entries will be judged include:

- The ability to capture a Sense of Wonder or a Sense of Wonder/Sense of the Wild
- How the intergenerational team planned and carried out the project and what made the project special because it involved persons from different generations
- How the creative project brought the team in touch with the natural world.

Winners will receive a certificate from RCLA and their first names and ages (optional) along with their winning entries will be posted in whole or in part on the RCLA web site.

## **6. Submitting 2016 Contest Entries**

Submit your entries via email to

rachelcarsonlandmark@verizon.net or sent via U.S. mail to:

**RCLA/Rachel Carson House  
11701 Berwick Road  
Silver Spring MD 20904**

Along with your entry, you must include the Official 2016 Entry Form, (attached) or (click here) for link to entry form. We will acknowledge receipt of your entry.

## **7. Deadline for Submitting 2016 Contest Entries**

The deadline for submission of entries is **November 1, 2016.**

## 8. Obtaining Official 2016 Contest Entry Forms

Use the attached entry form or (click here) for link to entry form on Rachel Carson Landmark Alliance web site <http://www.rachelcarsonlandmarkalliance.org>

## 9. Date for Announcing 2016 Contest Winners

Winners will be announced by **December 1, 2016**.

## 10. About Rachel Carson

Rachel Carson (1907-1964) is considered one of America's most influential authors. She wrote three books about marine biology, two of which, *The Sea Around Us* and *The Edge of the Sea*, were best sellers. Her fourth book, the splendid, groundbreaking *Silent Spring* (1962), documented threats to the environment and human health from use of chemical pesticides — at a time when many Americans regarded them as harmless technological miracles. *Silent Spring* had a profound effect on the public's attitude about pesticides. The founding of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (1970) and the passage of environmental laws in the decade following Carson's death are attributed in large part to the efforts of this eloquent woman.

### Rachel Carson and *The Sense of Wonder*: A Gift to Readers and the Environment

*The Sense of Wonder* can inspire parents, mentors, and others who love the Earth to help children become receptive to the natural delights all around us: the sound of the dawn chorus of birds; the sight of Virginia bluebells in spring; the scent of wet, wild woodlands; and the feeling of salt spray from the sea, to name a few.

In *The Sense of Wonder*, Carson asserted that sharing Nature with a child reinforces the young person's inborn sense of curiosity and wonder. This awakening can be followed by the learning of facts. Carson believed children should, "first encounter organisms in the wild... prior to laboratory study." (Sideris & Moore, *Rachel Carson: Legacy and Challenge*, 2008) *The Sense of Wonder* reflects Carson's belief that introducing children to Na-

ture as a source of knowledge and delight, "is as fundamental as instruction in reading and writing." (Sideris & Moore, *Rachel Carson: Legacy and Challenge*, 2008)

Carson also believed that Nature can be a source of healing power for people of all ages. She wrote: "Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts." (*The Sense of Wonder*) The capacity of Nature to benefit our health and outlook has been verified in the years since *The Sense of Wonder* was published. A recent study found that subjects walking through tree-filled parks experienced "help with attention fatigue and stress recovery." (*The New York Times*, "Brain Fatigue Goes Green," 4/2/13)

A nature-based sense of wonder can inspire better protection of the planet from many of our present-day environmental threats. Those who work to communicate how to achieve a sustainable society and protect ecosystem services need to consider including the sense of wonder as a core component of their message.

***"Wonder is an antidote to the view that the elements of the natural world...are merely means to human ends, commodities to be disdained or destroyed. Wonder reminds us of the essential worth of the [natural] world we're part of...Wonder may be the keystone virtue in our time of reckless destruction, a source of decency and hope and restraint."***

(Kathleen Dean Moore in Sideris & Moore, *Rachel Carson: Legacy and Challenge*, 2008)

## 11. History of the Contest

The Contest originated with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) along with several partner organizations. It was conducted for 7 years primarily by the USEPA through their web site by Kathy Sykes. In December 2013, the USEPA suspended the Contest. See <http://www.epa.gov/aging/carson>. The contest came under the sponsorship of Rachel Carson Landmark Alliance (RCLA) starting in 2014.

## 12. Previous Contest Winners

[Click Here] for link to information about previous contest winners.

# RACHEL CARSON LANDMARK ALLIANCE

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Rachel Carson Landmark Alliance (RCLA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to developing educational information and intergenerational initiatives for public participation that reflect Rachel Carson's ecological legacy and her courageous life in conjunction with the house where she wrote *Silent Spring*. This site with its library inside and wildlife habitat outside is suffused with Ms. Carson's deep reverence for scientific truth and her dedication to preserving a natural, sustainable environment wherever possible.

Prepared by Diana Post with Donna Savage and Munro Meyersburg.

Cover photos by Ross Feldner except "Rachel Carson watching migrating hawks at Hawk Mountain, PA, 1945", by Shirley A. Briggs; photograph courtesy of the Rachel Carson Council.