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Wildness: Relations Of People And Place



Synopsis

Whether referring to a place, a nonhuman animal or plant, or a state of mind, wild indicates autonomy and agency, a will to be, a unique expression of life. Yet two contrasting ideas about wild nature permeate contemporary discussions: either that nature is most wild in the absence of a defiling human presence, or that nature is completely humanized and nothing is truly wild. This book charts a different path. Exploring how people can become attuned to the wild community of life and also contribute to the well-being of the wild places in which we live, work, and play, *Wildness* brings together esteemed authors from a variety of landscapes, cultures, and backgrounds to share their stories about the interdependence of everyday human lifeways and wildness. As they show, far from being an all or nothing proposition, wildness exists in variations and degrees that range from cultivated soils to multigenerational forests to sunflowers pushing through cracks in a city alley. Spanning diverse geographies, these essays celebrate the continuum of wildness, revealing the many ways in which human communities can nurture, adapt to, and thrive alongside their wild nonhuman kin. From the contoured lands of Wisconsin's Driftless region to remote Alaska, from the amazing adaptations of animals and plants living in the concrete jungle to indigenous lands and harvest ceremonies, from backyards to reclaimed urban industrial sites, from microcosms to bioregions and atmospheres, manifestations of wildness are everywhere. With this book, we gain insight into what wildness is and could be, as well as how it might be recovered in our lives—and with it, how we might unearth a more profound, wilder understanding of what it means to be human. *Wildness: Relations of People and Place* is published in association with the Center for Humans and Nature, an organization that brings together some of the brightest minds to explore and promote human responsibilities to each other and the whole community of life. Visit the Center for Humans and Nature's Wildness website for upcoming events and a series of related short films.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“This amazing amalgam goes at the issue of nature, wildness, and our relationships to it via personal story, lyrical verse, and reflection. It is a return to something that works most effectively—a diversity of noteworthy voices tuned to a single issue—but that is so diverse in its assemblage and affect as to be totally unique and useful. Comprehensive, inclusive, and evocative, comfortable enough to be considered literature but groundbreaking enough to enter into discussions of policy and planning for the future, *Wildness* is storytelling and word-singing at its best. It is also a book I simply (and badly) want on my bookshelf to pull down and read words that flow like water but have the lasting impact of fire.” (J. Drew Lanham, Clemson University, author of *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man’s Love Affair with Nature*)

“An impressively thoughtful and artful collection. The pieces in *Wildness* are engaging and often lyrical, maintaining a kind of authorial intimacy throughout; collectively they work well to advance the book’s timely theme of the wild as a human condition. Brimming with strong and original voices, this is a top-flight anthology that takes an old idea and makes it new, hip, and fresh.” (Ben A. Minteer, Arizona State University, coeditor of *After Preservation: Saving American Nature in the Age of Humans*)

Gavin Van Horn is the director of Cultures of Conservation for the Center for Humans and Nature, a nonprofit organization that focuses on and promotes conservation ethics. He is coeditor of *City Creatures: Animal Encounters in the Chicago Wilderness*, also published by the University of Chicago Press. He lives in Evanston, IL. John Hausdoerffer is a fellow for the Center for Humans and Nature as well as the executive director of the Center for Environment & Sustainability at Western State Colorado University, where he is professor of environmental sustainability and philosophy and directs the Master in Environmental Management Program. He is the author of *Catlin’s Lament: Indians, Manifest Destiny, and the Ethics of Nature* and editor of Aaron Abeyta’s *Letters from the Headwaters*. He lives in Gunnison, CO.

A very informative read!

A great book that examines the ideas of wildness in wilderness, in rural areas, and in urban areas. It looks at wildness from the Euro-American perspective but also from other cultures and nationalities. It really explores and explodes the ideas of what wildness is, how it functions, why we need it, and how we can cultivate it in our lives. A dynamic group of voices sharing their views and love for wildness.

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