

Abbey, Edward. *The Monkeywrench Gang*. Harper Perennial, 2006.

The story centers on Vietnam veteran George Washington Hayduke III, who returns to the desert to find his beloved canyons and rivers threatened by industrial development. On a rafting trip down the Colorado River, Hayduke joins forces with feminist saboteur Bonnie Abzug, wilderness guide Seldom Seen Smith, and billboard torcher Doc Sarvis, M.D., and together they wander off to wage war on the big yellow machines, on dam builders and road builders and strip miners. As they do, his characters voice Abbey's concerns about wilderness preservation ("Hell of a place to lose a cow," Smith thinks to himself while roaming through the canyonlands of southern Utah. "Hell of a place to lose your heart. Hell of a place... to lose. Period").

Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous*. Vintage, 1997.

How did Western civilization become so estranged from nonhuman nature that we condone the ongoing destruction of forests, rivers, valleys, species and ecosystems? Santa Fe ecologist/philosopher Abram's search for an answer to this dilemma led him to mingle with shamans in Nepal and sorcerers in Indonesia, where he studied how traditional healers monitor relations between the human community and the animate environment. In this stimulating inquiry, he also delves into the philosophy of phenomenologists Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who replaced the conventional view of a single, wholly determinable reality with a fluid picture of the mind/body as a participatory organism that reciprocally interacts with its surroundings. Abram blames the invention of the phonetic alphabet for triggering a trend toward increasing abstraction and alienation from nature. He gleans insights into how to heal the rift from Australian aborigines' concept of the Dreamtime (the perpetual emerging of the world from chaos), the Navajo concept of a Holy Wind and the importance of breath in Jewish mysticism.

Bacigalupi, Paolo. *The Wind-Up Girl*. Night Shade Books, 2010.

Grim but beautifully written tale of Bangkok struggling for survival in a post-oil era of rising sea levels and out-of-control mutation. Capt. Jaidee Rojjanasukchai of the Thai Environment Ministry fights desperately to protect his beloved nation from foreign influences. Factory manager Anderson Lake covertly searches for new and useful mutations for a hated Western agribusiness. Aging Chinese immigrant Tan Hock Seng lives by his wits while looking for one last score. Emiko, the titular despised but impossibly seductive product of Japanese genetic engineering, works in a brothel until she accidentally triggers a civil war.

Bass, Rick. *The Wild Marsh*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009.

Bass gets up close and personal with local fauna, flora and folks in this account of the passing seasons in northwestern Montana's Yaak Valley wilderness range, where he and his family—four of the estimated 150 inhabitants of the half-a-million-acre region—have dwelled for 13 years. January is the dark month; March heralds the mud season; May brings hard rains and the first aspen buds. July and August are when fire, forest's breath,

both renews the landscape and threatens homes. Come October, heroic fatigue sets in after spring's heady growth and summer's steady pace, and spirits surge on a brittle, sunny day in December. Bass complements naturalistic observations with anecdotes about his neighbors, like the accommodating old-timers who winch his truck out of a ravine.

Beavan, Colin. *No Impact Man*. Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2009.

Beavan chronicles his yearlong effort to leave as little impact on the environment as possible. Realizing that he had erred in thinking that condemning other people's misdeeds somehow made [him] virtuous, he makes a stab at genuine (and radical) virtue: forgoing toilet paper and electricity, relinquishing motorized transportation, becoming a locavore and volunteering with environmental organizations. Beavan captures his own shortcomings with candor and wit and offers surprising revelations.

Callenbach, Ernest. *Ecotopia*. Heyday, 2004.

A novel portraying a future ecologically sustainable society located in what was formerly the states of Washington, Oregon, and northern California. It is a hopeful vision of what industrial society must become if it is to survive, presented in news-story and diary entry forms. Callenbach gives us a vivid, comprehensive, positive vision of what the earth's future might look like, if those who care about sustainability had a say. Highly imaginative, this much-loved book is at the same time blessedly down to earth. Nearly a million copies have been sold in nine languages.

Crichton, Michael. *State of Fear*. Harper, 2009.

For his latest foray, Crichton alters his usual formula--three parts thrills and spills to one part hard science--to a less appetizing concoction that is half anti-global warming screed and half adventure yarn. This adds a mission impossible element to Wilson's narration: how to make pages of research interesting enough to hold the listener's attention until hero and heroine face their next peril.... Consequently, the scientific material that Crichton spent three years researching seems even more copious in audio format than in print. And it's certainly much harder to flip past.... As they hot-foot it around the globe, assisting an Indiana Jones-like MIT professor in thwarting evils perpetrated by a mass-murdering environmentalist, Wilson stirs up a little suspense by speaking faster and more energetically. But the book's abundance of statistics would slow any narrator's momentum, and Wilson is no exception.

Dillard, Annie. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. Harper Perennial, 2007.

A series of essays that combines scientific observation, philosophy, daily thoughts, and deeper introspection with glorious prose. On the surface, Annie Dillard is simply exploring a place called Tinker Creek and its inhabitants: "It's a good place to live; there's lots to think about." But as her observations range well beyond the landscape into worlds of esoteric fact and metaphysical insight, each paragraph becomes suffused with images

and ideas. Whether she is quoting the Koran or Albert Einstein, describing the universe of an Eskimo shaman or the mating of luna moths, Annie Dillard offers up her own knowledge with reverence for her material and respect for her reader.

Dunne, Peter. *Prairie Spring*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009.

Dunne presents an intimate account of a two-month trek—accompanied by photographer wife Linda—following the coming of spring across America's prairie grasslands. Theirs is an odyssey into the time of beginning that weaves together spiritual insight, plant biology, geology lessons and American history—and a plethora of bird sightings, from the mating trysts of the increasingly rare lesser prairie chicken to the plight of the threatened mountain plover.

Gilbertz, Susan J., and Trudy Milburn. *Citizen Discourse on Contaminated Water, Superfund Cleanups, and Landscape Restoration: (Re)making Milltown, Montana*. Cambria, 2011.

This book traces the primary concerns of Milltown locals as they discussed the contamination and the cleanup in 2005. The purpose of this study was to investigate a public engaged in discussions about a local landscape, expressly to determine the degree to which intersecting and diverging notions of place could be understood as a coherent discourse. In stark contrast to the two to three minutes citizens are typically afforded at public hearings, the authors set out to expose the details of how locals combined information and logics into sense-making narratives. They employed an in-depth interviewing technique that encouraged the participants to elaborate rather than truncate their concerns. In doing so, the authors exposed distinct sets of interpretive resources employed by locals both as means of understanding their situation and for projecting into the future.

Harrison, Jim. *Sundog*. Washington Square Press, 1991.

In the wilds of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Robert Corvus Strang is crawling through the woods. A beautiful Costa Rican woman is dancing in a string bikini, and a dissipated writer is trying to stay on his feet....All three have retreated to this isolated land -- where Strang, builder of dams and bridges, preacher of gospels, lover of women, explorer of limits, launches into the story of his monumental life. In a novel that stretches from Michigan to Africa and the Amazon, Strang leads his listeners across rivers of time, through the nature of innocence, politics and desire, to a final and stunning defiance of life's frailty.

Hertsgaard, Mark. *Earth Odyssey: Around the World in Search of Our Environmental Future*. Broadway, 1999.

An ambitious report on the global environmental crisis, Hertsgaard's new book is based on his round-the-world odyssey, from 1991-1997. Refuting skeptics, he aims to show that Earth's ecological crisis is real and deepening. His frontline dispatches on air and water

pollution, acid rain and resource depletion in China, Africa, Brazil, Thailand, Greece, Russia and Eastern Europe are chilling. Drawing on interviews with Czech president Vaclav Havel and energy expert Amory Lovins, as well as with public health officials, UN administrators, economists and Greenpeace activists, Hertsgaard details several interrelated crises: the worldwide impact of automobiles; runaway population growth; the environmental consequences of Western-influenced consumption patterns in developing nations; nuclear waste disposal, nuclear terrorism and the threat of nuclear war.

Hertsgaard, Mark. *Hot: Living Through the Next Fifty Years on Earth*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011.

A new father, Hertsgaard (Earth Odyssey) was growing increasingly anxious and despondent about climate change and the world his child would inherit. His new book is his investigation into the techniques that could allow his daughter and her generation "to survive the challenges ahead." This readable, passionate book is surprisingly optimistic: Seattle, Chicago, and New York are making long-term, comprehensive plans for flooding and drought. Impoverished farmers in the already drought-stricken African Sahel have discovered how to substantially improve yields and decrease malnutrition by growing trees among their crops, and the technique has spread across the region; Bangladeshis, some of the poorest and most flood-vulnerable yet resilient people on earth, are developing imaginative innovations such as weaving floating gardens from water hyacinth that lift with rising water. Contrasting the Netherland's 200-year flood plans to the New Orleans Katrina disaster, Hertsgaard points out that social structures, even more than technology, will determine success, and persuasively argues that human survival depends on bottom-up, citizen-driven government action.

Hiassen, Carl. *Native Tongue*. Grand Central Publishing, 2005.

Writing like an Edward Abbey of South Florida, Hiassen sets his reluctant journalist hero after a morally corrupt real estate developer planning to build an 18-hole golf course on North Key Largo. Burned out as an investigative reporter for a Miami newspaper, Joe Winder now writes PR releases for the Amazing Kingdom of Thrills, a sleazy theme park owned by Francis X. Kingsbury, who hopes to increase his fortune with a nearby golf resort. When Winder learns that the purportedly last living pair of blue-tongued mango voles, recently stolen centerpieces of the Rare Animal Pavilion, are not an endangered species as claimed, he joins the forces opposed to his boss. These include the Mothers of Wilderness, an organization of well-heeled blue-haired activists, and a semi-crazy recluse named Skink, a former Florida governor who has become a sort of Robin Hood of the Keys.

High Country News. Subscriptions can be purchased in bulk for \$5 a student and delivered to the instructor for distribution.

House, Silas. *Clay's Quilt*. Ballantine, 2002.

A deep love for home suffuses this heartfelt, well-crafted debut novel set in the Kentucky hills. Clay Sizemore, a young coal miner from a big family and a small town, never doubts that he will live out his life in the place where he was born.... Violence is inescapable in a place where even Clay carries a pretty pearl-handled pistol, and his mother's violent end foreshadows a death that threatens Clay and Alma's happiness together.

House, Silas. *The Coal Tattoo*. Ballantine, 2005.

Set in the 1960s, the novel functions as a prequel of sorts to House's award-winning book *Clay's Quilt*, offering two sisters who are as different as night and day.... As they fight to protect their mountain from the mining company that wants to clear the earth and strip it bare, the sisters make sacrifices for one another that will grip the reader.... The titular image of the coal tattoo—a bluish tinge that seeps under a miner's skin and leaves a permanent stain—is a perfect metaphor for the novel's depiction of the indelible imprint the land leaves on the human soul.

Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*. Harper Perennial, 2008.

This book chronicles the year that Barbara Kingsolver, along with her husband and two daughters, made a commitment to become locavores—those who eat only locally grown foods. This first entailed a move away from their home in non-food-producing Tuscon to a family farm in Virginia, where they got right down to the business of growing and raising their own food and supporting local farmers. For teens who grew up on supermarket offerings, the notion not only of growing one's own produce but also of harvesting one's own poultry was as foreign as the concept that different foods relate to different seasons. While the volume begins as an environmental treatise—the oil consumption related to transporting foodstuffs around the world is enormous—it ends, as the year ends, in a celebration of the food that physically nourishes even as the recipes and the memories of cooks and gardeners past nourish our hearts and souls.

Kingsolver, Barbara. *Prodigal Summer*. Harper Perennial, 2001.

Kingsolver continues to take on timely issues, here focusing on the ecological damage caused by herbicides, ethical questions about raising tobacco, and the endangered condition of subsistence farming. A corner of southern Appalachia serves as the setting for the stories of three intertwined lives, and alternating chapters with recurring names signal which of the three protagonists is taking center stage. Each character suffers because his or her way of looking at the world seems incompatible with that of loved ones.... If Kingsolver is sometimes too blatant in creating diametrically opposed characters and paradoxical inconsistencies, readers will be seduced by her effortless prose, her subtle use of Appalachian patois. They'll also respond to the sympathy with which she reflects the difficult lives of people struggling on the hard edge of poverty while tied intimately to the natural world and engaged an elemental search for dignity and

human connection.

Kolbert, Elizabeth. *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*. Bloomsbury, 2006.

Expanding on a three-part series for the *New Yorker*, Kolbert (*The Prophet of Love*) lets facts rather than polemics tell the story: in essence, it's that Earth is now nearly as warm as it has been at any time in the last 420,000 years and is on the precipice of an unprecedented "climate regime, one with which modern humans have had no prior experience." An inexorable increase in the world's average temperature means that butterflies, which typically restrict themselves to well-defined climate zones, are now flitting where they've never been found before; that nearly every major glacier in the world is melting rapidly; and that the prescient Dutch are already preparing to let rising oceans reclaim some of their land. In her most pointed chapter, Kolbert chides the U.S. for refusing to sign on to the Kyoto Accord.

LeGuin, Ursula. *The Word for World is Forest*. Tor Books, 2010.

When the inhabitants of a peaceful world are conquered by the bloodthirsty yumens, their existence is irrevocably altered. Forced into servitude, the Athsheans find themselves at the mercy of their brutal masters. Desperation causes the Athsheans, led by Selver, to retaliate against their captors, abandoning their strictures against violence. But in defending their lives, they have endangered the very foundations of their society. For every blow against the invaders is a blow to the humanity of the Athsheans. And once the killing starts, there is no turning back.

Lopez, Barry. *Arctic Dreams*. Vintage, 2001.

Based on 15 extended trips to the Canadian far north over a five-year period, *Arctic Dreams* celebrates the mysteries of what documentarians fondly call "last frontiers." Such places are everywhere in danger of destruction in the interest of ever-elusive economic progress, but Lopez writes no jeremiads. Instead, he aims to foster a kind of learned understanding of wild places, in this case the vast, scarcely knowable northern landscape. Writing of the natural history of the Arctic and its inhabitants--narwhals, polar bears, beluga whales, musk oxen, and caribou among them--Lopez draws powerful lessons from the land and imparts them assuredly and gracefully.

Peacock, Andrea. *Wasting Libby*. AK Press, 2010.

Wasting Libby chronicles decades of neglect by state and federal agencies, which allowed the Grace corporation to reap millions in profits from the largest vermiculite mine in the world, while knowingly exposing generations of Montana residents to fatal levels of asbestos-contaminated dust. Libby's story, which culminates in the 2009 criminal trial of the corporation's executives, is ultimately the tale of the families who fought Grace for justice, who refused to sacrifice their dignity even as they lost their lives.

Pollan, Michael. *Omnivore's Dilemma*. Penguin, 2007.

A Chicken McNugget, for example, illustrates our consumption of corn and, in turn, agribusiness's oil dependency. In a journey that takes us from an "organic" California chicken farm to Vermont, Pollan asks basic questions about the moral and ecological consequences of our food. Critics agree it's a wake-up call and, written in clear, informative prose, also entertaining. Most found Pollan's quest for his foraged meal the highlight, though the *Los Angeles Times* faulted Pollan's hypocritical method of "living off the land." Many also voiced a desire for a more concrete vision for the future. But if the book doesn't outline a diet plan, it's nonetheless a loud, convincing call for change

Proulx, Annie. *Bad Dirt*. Scribner, 2005.

The beautiful and harsh terrain of Wyoming and the tough and often eccentric people who make their lives there are again on display in this collection of stories (a sequel to the much-lauded *Close Range: Wyoming Stories*).

Proulx, Annie. *Close Range*. Scribner, 2000. Wyoming.

Understanding that the West's infinite spaces tended to inspire neither introspection nor contemplation, but a violent and insatiable restlessness, Proulx's eight stories are dark reflections on the lives of a handful of characters striving to define themselves against the unforgiving landscapes.

Ray, Janice. *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*. Milkweed, 2000.

Ray, a poet and an environmental activist, takes a tough-minded look at life in rural southern Georgia in this blend of memoir and nature study. She presents detailed observations of her family members.... Interspersed with these portraits are various chapters describing the beauty of the longleaf pine flatwoods and other natural treasures found, and often endangered, in her home state. Ray's writing is at its best when she recalls her most harrowing memories, such as when her father gave her and her two brothers a whipping after they stood by and watched a friend kill a turtle. These scenes resonate during the interpolated naturalist chapters, which evoke the calm of the landscape and give readers a respite from the anger and pain that drive much of the family narrative.

Robinson, Kim Stanley. *Mars Trilogy. Red Mars*: Spectra, 1993.

Red Mars opens with a tragic murder, an event that becomes the focal point for the surviving characters and the turning point in a long intrigue that pits idealistic Mars colonists against a desperately overpopulated Earth, radical political groups of all stripes against each other, and the interests of transnational corporations against the dreams of the pioneers.... Robinson fantasizes brilliantly about the science of terraforming a hostile world, analyzes the socio-economic forces that propel and attempt to control real interplanetary colonization, and imagines the diverse reactions that humanity would have to the dead, red planet.

Smith, Alisa, and J.B. MacKinnon. *Plenty: Eating Locally on the 100-Mile Diet*. Clarkson Potter, 2008.

When Alisa Smith and James MacKinnon learned that the average ingredient in a North American meal travels 1,500 miles from farm to plate, they decided to launch a simple experiment to reconnect with the people and places that produced what they ate. For one year, they would only consume food that came from within a 100-mile radius of their Vancouver apartment. The 100-Mile Diet was born.

Steingraber, Sandra. *Living Downstream*. Da Capo, 2010.

The updated science in this exciting new edition strengthens the case for banning poisons now pervasive in our air, our food, and our bodies. Because synthetic chemicals linked to cancer come mostly from petroleum and coal, Steingraber shows that investing in green energy also helps prevent cancer. Saving the planet becomes a matter of saving ourselves and an issue of human rights. A documentary film based on the book will coincide with publication.

Steingraber, Sandra. *Raising Elijah*. Da Capo, 2011.

Sandra Steingraber is a voice of reason with strong fact-based arguments for strengthening our environmental protections to more adequately protect children's health. Using her own experiences as a parent she brings to life the dilemmas parents face trying to protect children from harms that are dispersed by industrial practices and chemical-intensive farming. A PhD scientist, she sources her material flawlessly, giving potent ammunition to those committed to help make our children's lives safer. She shows us that the potent hazards to children of lead paint were well known by 1936, 40 years prior to the US ban on lead paint was enacted in 1976. But more than just a historical work showing the alarming rise in pre-natal and early childhood exposures to a range of carcinogens, endocrine disrupters, and asthma inducing substances; she shows us some parenting methods and grassroots activism to lead us towards a more healthy world for all children.

Steingraber, Sandra. Interview with.

<http://kopn.org/a/fl2.html?http://kopn.org/dc/fs/07-22-10%20Food%20Sleuth.mp3>

Stephenson, Neal. *Zodiac*. Grove, 2007.

Stephenson's improbable hero is Sangamon Taylor, a high-tech jack-of-all-trades who inhales nitrous oxide for kicks and scouts environmental hazards for GEE, the Group of Environmental Extremists. Taylor particularly wants to nab the polluters of Boston Harbor, whose toxic sludge he monitors by zipping from illegal pipeline to illegal pipeline in his inflatable Zodiac raft. His work is slow-going and boring until the concentration of deadly PCBs rises inexplicably and then mysteriously drops to nothing.

And then the "eco-thriller" begins: the bad guys are everywhere as Taylor ferrets out the connections between his bizarre landlord, a nerdy friend from college who's at work on a top-secret genetic-engineering project for a high-tech company, an industrialist-turned-Presidential-candidate and the crazed fans of Poyzen Boyzen, a heavy-metal band. In creating this all-too-conceivable story of industry and science running amok, Stephenson puts his technological knowledge elegantly to use, but never lets gadgets and gizmos take over the story.

Ward, Chip. *Canaries on the Rim*. Verso, 2001.

In his ardent memoir, Ward, who has fought for the health of the Great Basin Desert, tells the story of his awakening as an environmentalist. He had been living a quiet family life in Grantsville, Utah, in the late 1970s when he began to suspect that the various industries in the region, including a magnesium refinery that expelled the rancid smell of chlorine and an army depot that demolished old weapons, were polluting the region. His community, he realized, risked becoming a new generation of downwinders (named after those who became ill after living downwind of nuclear testing).

Williams, Terry Tempest. *Red: Passion and Patience in the Desert*. Vintage, 2002.

Shaped by wind, heat and the etchings of rare water, the deserts of the American West are at the heart of Williams's numerous writings on the need to preserve wilderness. This new collection of writings (some of which have been published before) is inspired by her daily experiences with the Southwestern desert, Anasazi petroglyphs and small shifts in time at her home outside Moab, Utah. Contributing to the movement to protect these fragile landscapes, she encourages her readers to consider the desert as a threatened national commons, drawing in the life around her to express just how the desert inhabits her and makes her more human.

Wilson, Duff. *Fateful Harvest*. Harper, 2002.

Arsenic, cadmium, lead, beryllium: industrial byproducts so toxic it is illegal to dump them into the air or water. Yet, through a loophole in "the crazy semantics of waste disposal," these same hazardous wastes are being applied to the food we eat. And until a small-town mayor from a farming community in Washington State became suspicious, nobody knew. Mayor Patty Martin is a whistleblower as extraordinary as Karen Silkwood and Erin Brockovich--smart, persistent, courageous, and overwhelmingly dedicated to her cause even when the town that elected her turned against her. Martin's obsession with hazardous waste in fertilizer began when she met Dennis DeYoung, a local farmer whose land was rendered infertile after the Cenex/Land O'Lakes company paid him to spread the residue from their fertilizer rinse pond on his land. But there was more than fertilizer residue there--it was a witches' brew of hazardous metals, cancer-causing chemicals, and even radioactive materials that hadn't been produced by the company itself. DeYoung and Martin wanted to know how they got there and why.