

## Fifty Books For The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: An Annotated Reading List

[Jeffrey Weise](#)

I don't know anyone who is a wilderness nut who doesn't have a favorite wilderness book. Or a shelf full. Ideas, literature, and wilderness go hand in hand. Books are one of the most important ways the wilderness idea has moved down to us through history. Philosophers and poets have been poking at the ideas, and writers have expanded on what they received. There is a clear and direct line from Henry David Thoreau to John Muir to Aldo Leopold to Edward Abbey to Ellen Meloy, and on to you. I have spent hours at wilderness trailheads, around campfires deep in wild country, and at conferences, talking with strangers, colleagues, and friends about books. A book that I read, a book that they read, or a book that we share together passionately. I put books in the hands of new and returning wilderness rangers and trail crew members, suggest books to wilderness visitors, and I'd like to offer this list to you. This reading list is not definitive. It's not even definitive for me. If you ask me to put together a reading list next winter, it will look different than this list. But, in honor of and to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act, here are some books you might consider. There's no hierarchy here or ranking; I've simply listed books alphabetically by author.

Desert Solitaire: A Season In The Wilderness  
Edward Abbey  
Random House, 1968

Edward Abbey worked as a seasonal ranger at Arches National Monument (Arches National Park since 1971) in the 1950's, and again in the 1960's. This book is his creative condensing of his journals and experiences during that time. It is nothing short of a masterpiece, and belongs on the short list of wild books that will be read as long as there are people to read them. After you've read this book, you will likely move on to other Abbey books, of which there are many. Ed was ornery and cantankerous, but he loved the West, deserts, and the canyon country of southern Utah, among other things.

The Unforeseen Wilderness: Kentucky's Red River Gorge  
Wendell Berry  
North Point Press, 1991

It is a pleasure to spend time in the company of Wendell Berry (through his books). As a novelist, as a poet, and as an essayist and writer of nonfiction, he is both a great thinker and a wonderful writer. In this book, Berry spends time in the Red River Gorge (which includes the [Clifty Wilderness](#)), near his Kentucky home, and thinks about wilderness while he's there. Berry is an innovative and clear thinker, and you are likely to come away from this book knowing more and better about wilderness.

The Outermost House  
Henry Beston  
Holt, 2003

*The Outermost House* is Beston's book about a year he spent living alone in a small house on the beach on Cape Cod in the 1920s. His companions are birds and other wildlife, and he writes beautifully about storms and wind and the movements of wildlife. The sea is a constant presence in the book. This book is rightly considered a classic, and I think of him as one of our best naturalists.

Lightly On The Land: The SCA Trail Building And Maintenance Manual  
Robert Birkby  
Mountaineers Books, 2009

If you spend time in wild places, you are likely traveling on trails to get there. How do trails get there, and what does it take to build and maintain them? No one should take trails for granted. There are people who commit their summers to working on trails, and there are more than a few people who have made it their life's work. This book will help you understand a lot about trails, and you will be a better wilderness traveler for it. A pocket-sized companion to this book is the Forest Service's "[Trail Construction And Maintenance Notebook](#)" by Woody Hesselbarth.

The Last Season  
Eric Blehm  
HarperCollins, 2006

This is a biography of Randy Morgenson. Randy was a long time wilderness ranger in Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks. Randy had a fascinating childhood and life, and Eric Blehm tells us the story of Randy's life very well. This is also an adventure story. One day in the summer of 1996, Randy left a note on his tent door, set off on patrol, and went missing.

The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt And The Crusade For America  
Douglas Brinkley  
Harper, 2010

There are many biographies of Theodore Roosevelt, but this one places him within the world of conservation, national parks, forest reserves, and other important policies and programs that too many of us take for granted these days. Theodore Roosevelt is a giant historical figure for those of us who care about conservation, forests, parks, and wildlife. Douglas Brinkley seems to have undertaken a huge writing project. This book was followed by *The Quiet World: Saving Alaska's Wilderness Kingdom, 1879-1960*

(Harper Perennial, 2011). He's got a couple more conservation-related books in the works, as well.

Let The Mountains Talk, Let The Rivers Run: A Call To Those Who Would Save The Earth

David Brower (with Steve Chapple)

HarperCollins, 1995

David Brower was a giant. He was Executive Director of the Sierra Club in the fifties and sixties, and was intimately involved in conservation efforts during his lifetime. This book is like a pep talk to those of us who are working in wilderness. If you're interested in learning more about David Brower, *The Wildness Within: Remembering David Brower* by his son Kenneth Brower (Heyday Books, 2012) is a collection of interviews with people who knew or were inspired by David Brower. David Brower is a key part of *Encounters With The Archdruid* by John McPhee (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971), and the film *Monumental: David Brower's Fight For Wild America*, directed by Kelly Duane will help you understand Brower's place in American history.

Bob Marshall In The Adirondacks: Writings Of A Pioneering Peak-Bagger, Pond-Hopper, And Wilderness Preservationist

Edited By Phil Brown

Lost Pond Press, 2006

Bob Marshall was an extraordinary human being. His accomplishments, his legendary wilderness travels, and his work and explorations across the country form the basis for the wilderness system that we have today. There is a biography of Bob Marshall, but it doesn't seem to be in print. When Bob Marshall worked for the Forest Service, he was instrumental in developing wilderness as an administrative reality within the agency. He cofounded the Wilderness Society, and died way too young. If you care about wilderness, Bob Marshall is one of the giants on whose shoulders you stand. Bob wrote a book about the time he spent living in Wiseman, Alaska called *Arctic Village* (University Of Alaska Press, 1991).

A Walk In The Woods: Rediscovering America On The Appalachian Trail

Bill Bryson

Anchor, 2006

Bill Bryson lived abroad for many years. On returning to live in the U.S., one of the ways he decided to rediscover his own country was by hiking the Appalachian Trail. It's a very funny book, and you'll look at things (the trail, your friends, outdoor retailers, etc.) differently after reading it. Better yet, throw it in your pack and go hike a long trail. Bill Bryson is good company.

Dirt Work: An Education In The Woods  
Christine Byl

Christine Byl worked for many years on trail crews, and this is her story of choosing this work, and then apprenticing herself to it. The seasonal life is not for everybody, and trail work even less so. Christine Byl helps us understand the value in the physical work of building and maintaining trails. The life and work of seasonals has not always been valued as highly as I think it should be, and seasonal work is often invisible to the recreating public. This book gives a great sense of who chooses this life, and why it is the best kind of life there is.

The Great New Wilderness Debate: An Expansive Collection Of Writings Defining Wilderness From John Muir To Gary Snyder  
Edited By J. Baird Callicott & Michael P. Nelson  
University Of Georgia Press, 1998

Expansive is right. Don't start with this one, or your eyes might glaze over. This is one big, fat book, full of ideas, interpretations, criticism, and historic perspective. There's a companion volume: *The Wilderness Debate Rages On: Continuing The Great New Wilderness Debate*, by the same editors and also published by The University Of Georgia Press (2008). Both volumes are well worth the time if you're looking to go deep into thinking about wilderness. A third book you might look for if you enjoy these is *American Wilderness: A New History*, edited by Michael Lewis (Oxford University Press, 2004). Wilderness is not without controversy, and these books focus in on some of the challenges.

Fire Season: Field Notes From A Wilderness Lookout  
Philip Connors  
Ecco, 2012

There is a long tradition of writers working as fire lookouts, and Philip Connors fits nicely in that line. He worked as a fire lookout in the Gila Wilderness. He captures the sense of what it is like to live and work in wilderness for a field season, and he is very thoughtful on wilderness and fire and other big issues.

Wild Song: Poems Of The Natural World  
Edited By John Daniel  
University Of Georgia Press, 1998

For many years, back when magazines were published on paper and distributed by subscription and available on newsstands, most conservation-related publications included poems in their pages. John

Daniel was the poetry editor at *Wilderness* magazine for many years, which was the magazine produced by the Wilderness Society. This anthology is a collection of poetry that appeared in the pages of *Wilderness*. It's a good place to start, and a nice collection to carry with you. Many of these poems are likely to lead you on to other works by the poets represented.

Walking Down The Wild: A Journey Through The Yellowstone Rockies  
Gary Ferguson  
Simon & Schuster, 1993

There is value in all of the wild places in the National Wilderness Preservation System. I have been fortunate in my life to spend some large chunks of time in big wilderness, and I think there is something incredibly valuable in those experiences. To step off the pavement and into the wilderness for 10 days, two weeks, a month, is a different kind of wilderness experience. There are fewer places where you can have that kind of experience than I wish there were, but it's still possible to go deep into a really big, wild place. This book describes Gary Ferguson's experience when he decided to hike a long ways through the Yellowstone country.

The Way Of Natural History  
Edited By Thomas Lowe Fleischner  
Trinity University Press, 2011

To my mind, the idea of being a wilderness enthusiast has always included the idea of being at least an amateur naturalist. Paying attention to the world, and learning the fellow creatures and plants with whom I share the world, and understanding as best I can the workings of natural systems, are a critical part of how I think about the wild. This varied collection of pieces comes at the idea of natural history from a number of different angles. After reading it, I bet you will see some things in ways you hadn't before.

The Secret Worlds Of Colin Fletcher  
Colin Fletcher  
Vintage, 1990

Colin Fletcher wrote the definitive book (as far as I'm concerned) about the hows, skills, and techniques of wilderness travel. Now in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition, he worked together with Chip Rawlins on *The Complete Walker IV* (Knopf, 2003). The first edition of that book came out in 1971, and helped me tremendously back then. I loved Fletcher's humor, attention to detail, and his unabashed personal preferences. Colin Fletcher was a legendary wilderness walker, and wrote several books. *The Man Who Walked*

*Through Time, The Thousand-Mile Summer*, just to name two. I included *The Secret Worlds Of Colin Fletcher* because it might be my favorite. It's a collection of shorter pieces, with descriptions of trips to Alaska, California, and other places. This book has a spirit of summing up: his ideas about walking in wild places are captured beautifully in this book.

Rewilding North America: A Vision For Conservation In The 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Dave Foreman  
Island Press, 2004

Alright, so we have a Wilderness Act and a National Wilderness Preservation System. Is that the end of it? Are we done; have we done all we can do? Dave Foreman has thought long, hard, and creatively about this, and he offers us a vision for the future.

Indian Creek Chronicles: A Winter Alone In The Wilderness  
Pete Fromm  
Picador, 2003

Here's a job for you: Pete Fromm was hired to spend seven months (over a winter) watching salmon eggs so that nothing happened to them. Up on the Bitterroot Divide, in Idaho but almost in Montana. Part adventure story, part observation, and part contemplative narrative, this is a long time favorite.

Wilderness Wisdom: Quotes For Inspirational Exploration  
Edited By John Gookin  
Stackpole Books, 2012

This is a great collection of ideas and quotes related to wilderness. It's small and compact and would fit nicely in a pack. If you're like me, I can take a single quote and spin my mind off into wild places. I've not been one for carrying fat novels, or trying to lose myself in a book while out in wild places. I usually carry a book of poems, or a book like this one. Now in a second edition, I recommend it highly.

The Stars, The Snow, The Fire: Twenty-Five Years In The Alaska Wilderness  
John Haines  
Graywolf Press, 2000

John Haines homesteaded in Alaska after serving in the Navy during World War II. He was an artist, and then turned to poetry, and eventually wrote this memoir about his time in Alaska. The writing is vivid, detailed, and beautiful. In reading of his life, we see into an older way of living. Living among wild animals, struggling to make a living, and living with the cold in interior Alaska, this is likely the best book we will ever have about

that time, and that way of life. John Haines was one of our greatest poets, and you'd be well served to seek out his poetry.

Soft Paths: How To Enjoy The Wilderness Without Harming It  
Bruce Hampton & David Cole  
Stackpole Books, 2003

Aldo Leopold gave us a land ethic, and that started many people thinking and writing about our obligation to the world we live in. During the 1980s in the Forest Service, some folks began to think about codifying an ethic and behaviors related to recreational use of wild lands. Leave No Trace has grown and developed since then. *Soft Paths* was an attempt to capture those ideas in an expansive way, building on research and experience. This book will give you plenty to think about, no matter the season or location or travel method of your ventures out into the wild. Another book covering similar ground is *Leave No Trace: A Guide To The New Wilderness Etiquette* by Annette McGivney (Mountaineers Books, 2003). Get yourself over to the [Leave No Trace](#) website, read one of these books, and start becoming a better wilderness traveler.

Crow Planet: Essential Wisdom From The Urban Wilderness  
Lyanda Lynn Haupt  
Back Bay Books, 2011

I loved this book. It's her attempt to stick up for crows, among other things, and she pays close attention to what goes on in her backyard, and in her neighborhood. More of us live in an urban or semi-urban environment than don't, and wildness lives there too. We have to pay closer attention to how we live in cities and suburbs, and maybe one of the ways to start that is by paying closer attention.

Out There: In The Wild In A Wired Age  
Ted Kerasote  
Voyageur Press, 2004

What are some of the technological tools and gadgets that have changed the nature of the wilderness experience? How do we fight back against the urge to take doodads along with us? And for how much longer will we even be able to leave the sights and sounds of civilization behind? Ted Kerasote uses a river trip in the far north of Canada to think about some of these issues. He also contrasts the modern experience with those of historic travelers in the north.

Into The Wild  
Jon Krakauer  
Villard, 1996

The easiest thing to do with the story of Chris McCandless is to turn him into a hero or a buffoon. He was neither. Lots of young people yearn to get away, to establish and define themselves, to become whoever they intend to be. Wild places have always played an important role in this, and will continue to be places of testing and refuge. Krakauer's skillful telling of the Chris McCandless story is standing the test of time. I thought Sean Penn did a wonderful job turning this book into a movie, as well.

A Sand County Almanac And Sketches Here And There

Aldo Leopold

Oxford University Press, 1949

I wish I could have known Aldo Leopold. He was such a wonderful storyteller, and for a scientist, wrote beautifully and poetically. His stories about the time he worked for the Forest Service are foundational to the wilderness idea. His growth and maturity as a human are marvelous. I have Leopold quotes all over the place in documents and on 3x5 cards; he wrote wonderful sentences and paragraphs. Everyone should read this book.

Arctic Dreams

Barry Lopez

Vintage, 1986

Barry Lopez is one of our greatest writers. This book is based on many years of travel in the Arctic; time spent with scientists and residents. Natural history, human history; he tells wonderful stories about scientific research and writes beautifully about the land and its residents. It is mythic in scope, and sometimes dream-like. I would recommend everything Barry Lopez has written, but this is just a beautiful book. Another good place to start is *Vintage Lopez*, a selection of his fiction and nonfiction.

Last Child In The Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder

Richard Louv

Algonquin Books, 2008

When I was a child, I spent a lot of time outdoors. After school we changed clothes and then went outside. To play whatever sport was in season, to wander aimlessly through fields, along train tracks, over hills and sometimes pretty far away. We were constrained only by the need to be home for dinner, or in at dark. I did a lot of camping, hiking and backpacking. I went on my first backpacking trip when I was 11. That was all fairly routine and common when I was a kid, but it doesn't seem to be the case so much these days. If we're going to have following generations who care about wilderness, we're going to have to get them outside. *Last*

*Child In The Woods* will focus your thoughts on that idea, and maybe you can help come up with solutions. Another book that explores the connection between children and the natural world is *The Geography Of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places* by Gary Paul Nabhan & Stephen Trimble (Beacon Press, 1994). Richard Louv's book *The Nature Principle: Reconnecting With Life In A Virtual Age* (Algonquin Books, 2012) is also very good.

The Snow Leopard  
Peter Matthiessen  
Viking, 1978

Peter Matthiessen went with [George Schaller](#) on a long walk to observe wild sheep and, hopefully, see a snow leopard. This book is often categorized as a travel book, but it's always been a wilderness book in my mind. Peter Matthiessen is another great writer, and he has written several books with strong connections to the wild. Even in his fiction (like *At Play In The Fields Of The Lord* or *Far Tortuga*) you get a strong sense that Matthiessen really understands wilderness. Schaller writes about the same trip in his book *Stones Of Silence: Journeys In The Himalaya* (Penguin, 1980).

American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau  
Edited By Bill McKibben  
Library Of America, 2008

The tradition of nature or environmental writing in this country is impressive. This book gives you a real sense of the evolution of writing since Henry David Thoreau. It's a huge book, and can only dip its toe in many parts of the canon, but it will send you off in many directions after you read it. In this book, you will introduce yourself to many, many writers and ideas, and it even includes a number of photos and illustrations. Highly recommended.

Raven's Exile: A Season On The Green River  
Ellen Meloy  
University Of Arizona Press, 2003

Sharp wit, humor, and keen observations of wild creatures (notably humans) and wild places mark this great first book by Ellen Meloy. She spent time on the Green River in Utah, with her river ranger husband, checking permits, floating the river, and scribbling. In some ways I think of her in the lineage of Edward Abbey, but she is more than that. After you read this book, seek out her other books. She gets better and better with each one.

Wild Comfort: The Solace Of Nature  
Kathleen Dean Moore  
Trumpeter, 2010

Kathleen Dean Moore is a keen observer of the natural world, a deep thinker about our connections to the world, and this book helps us understand ways that the world helps her through difficult times. Life gives us difficulties and challenges; it's in the nature of being alive. I found this book thoughtful and comforting. I am a fan of all of her books.

Never Cry Wolf  
Farley Mowat  
Little, Brown, 1963

A young wildlife biologist is sent to northern Canada to figure out why wolves are killing all the caribou. It turns out it's a lot more complicated than that. This is the story of his adventures in getting there, living there, and what he finds out. Put this book in the hands of a young person with an interest in wildlife. This book was also made into a beautiful movie.

Nature Writings: The Story Of My Boyhood And Youth; My First Summer In The Sierra; The Mountains Of California; Stickeen; Essays  
John Muir  
Library Of America, 1997

The life and journey of John Muir is a great American story. This book is a collection of several of his individual books, and allows you to understand his growth and maturity as a passionate and articulate wilderness defender. Take a trip with Muir as he discovers the Sierra, listen to him as he sings the praises of his beloved Yosemite, and even wander off to Alaska with him (and a small dog). If you haven't read John Muir, you're behind and need to catch up.

Wilderness And The American Mind (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)  
Roderick Frazier Nash  
Yale University, 2001

This is the definitive book about the idea of wilderness. It's used frequently as a textbook, sure, but it's highly readable. The revised editions have expanded the scope of what wilderness means, and have also highlighted the issues and controversies. It's a really good book as well as a great history of wilderness. There's a new fifth edition out in January 2014.

The Island Within  
Richard Nelson  
Vintage, 1991

This is another one of those books to take your time with. Richard Nelson digs deep on his island, spends a lot of time there, and pays close attention. From the particulars of this island—wildlife and wild plants, observations of human activities, and a close observation of relationships based on time spent with natives—Nelson allows us to understand quite a bit more about the world. He has earned the ability to draw some conclusions about life and how it works. He never names the island he's writing about, and we don't really need to know more than what he writes in this very wise book.

The Idea Of Wilderness: From Prehistory To The Age Of Ecology  
Max Oelschlaeger  
Yale University Press, 1993

Wilderness is a big idea. This book tells us the sweep of the story, across a large swath of human history. Where *Wilderness And The American Mind* shows us how the wilderness idea evolved in our country, Max Oelschlaeger takes us into ancient history, and gives a world perspective. He's also very astute on where we are today.

Reflections From The North Country  
Sigurd F. Olson  
University Of Minnesota Press, 1976

Sigurd Olson dug in deep. An inveterate wilderness traveler from his home in Ely, Minnesota, Sigurd wandered on foot and by canoe all over the Boundary Waters and Quetico-Superior country. He was a prolific writer and was a key conservation figure in the twentieth century. *Reflections From The North Country* was written late in his life, and you get the sense that he was really trying to sum up a life's work and travels there. Another good place to start would be *Songs Of The North* (Penguin, 1987), which is a selection of pieces from his other books.

Grizzly Years: In Search Of The American Wilderness  
Doug Peacock  
Holt, 1996

Doug Peacock was a Green Beret medic who served in Vietnam. When he came home, he needed to figure some things out. His solution was to spend time in wilderness, as well as in the company of grizzly bears. Peacock is a great storyteller and legendary figure.

On The Wild Edge: In Search Of A Natural Life  
David Petersen  
Holt, 2006

How should we live our lives? There is wilderness, but we don't live there. This book describes one couple's attempts to live more conscious lives, closer to the wild. Can everybody live this kind of life? Probably not, but I'm glad to have David Petersen's book.

Sky's Witness: A Year In The Wind River Range  
C.L. Rawlins  
Holt, 1993

Chip Rawlins was a long time Forest Service employee. He worked at various jobs, but spent a long time doing air quality monitoring in the Wind River Range. This book tells the story of the field work he did, and the people he worked with. Chip is also a really great poet, and his book *Broken Country: Mountains And Memory* (Holt, 1996) is worth seeking out.

Almost Somewhere: Twenty-Eight Days On The John Muir Trail  
Suzanne Roberts  
Bison Books, 2012

Have you ever been 22 years old? Ever tried to figure things out in life? This book chronicles Suzanne Roberts' hike on the John Muir Trail, right after graduating from college. She's trying to make sense of some things, and find her way. She's not real skilled at wilderness travel. This is one of the great values of wilderness in our modern society. It's a place to go, unplug and disconnect, and figure some things out. Put a pack on your back, sleep on the ground, sweat your sunburned way over passes, and you'll be a better person for it. Whether you're young or not.

The Enduring Wilderness: Protecting Our Natural Heritage Through The Wilderness Act  
Doug Scott  
Fulcrum Publishing, 2004

Isn't it wonderful, all the different angles you can use to come to an understanding of wilderness. Doug Scott helps us understand the legislative history of the Wilderness Act, the various places that are important in the development and progress of wilderness, and the charge the Wilderness Act gives us for managing the "enduring resource of wilderness." I'm very glad that we have Doug Scott around, who understands policy and process, and can explain them to the rest of us.

Our Wilderness: America's Common Ground  
Doug Scott  
Fulcrum Publishing, 2009

This book makes a great gift, or a book to leave lying on a table where someone might stumble on it, or in a visitor center. It's full of photographs and helps us understand the value of wilderness. Through personal testimony of people who care about wilderness, we get to share in a sense of what a good thing wilderness is in our country.

Coming Home To The Pleistocene  
Paul Shepard  
Island Press, 2004

What does it mean to be human? I'm thinking particularly in the sense of how humans evolved in this world, why we are the creatures we are, and how our cultures developed and evolved. Paul Shepard thought a lot about humans in that way, as well. As hunters, humans lived with and among other animals, and we had relationships with the world. Many of us have lost any real connection to the world we live in, and I am glad that a great thinker like Paul Shepard has helped me understand myself. You could also start with *The Only World We've Got: A Paul Shepard Reader*, edited by Paul Shepard himself.

Riprap And Cold Mountain Poems (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition)  
Gary Snyder  
Counterpoint, 2009

When Gary Snyder was a young man, he worked on a trail crew in Yosemite National Park, and worked as a fire lookout in the Pacific Northwest. The title and several poems come from his experiences on trails in wilderness. I think this book should be standard issue to new trail crew workers. There's a beautiful 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of this book; get a copy and stick it in your pack. *Look Out: A Selection Of Writings* is also a nice pocket sized collection of Gary Snyder's poems. His translations of Han Shan's Cold Mountain Poems are wonderful to read in the wilderness.

The Practice Of The Wild  
Gary Snyder  
North Point Press, 1990

In 1992, I was a Wilderness Ranger on the Pinedale Ranger District, working on the west side of the Wind River Range, in the Bridger Wilderness. I had a great field season that year for many reasons: I met some terrific people, got to spend a summer in the Winds, and turned some important pages in my life. For some strange reason, the only book I carried with me in the wilderness that summer was this book by Gary Snyder. *The Practice Of The Wild* is a challenging book, and it made sense for me to think about the ideas slowly. Gary Snyder is one of our

greatest poets, and his essays and nonfiction are brilliant and his work has helped me tremendously in my understanding of the wild and wilderness.

Now Go Home: Wilderness, Belonging, And The Crosscut Saw  
Ana Maria Spagna  
Oregon State University Press, 2004

Ana Maria Spagna worked seasonally on trail crews, and lived the seasonal life for a while. To my way of thinking, she really gets it right in this book. She really gets the sense of being at the bottom of the bureaucracy, the sometimes silliness, the great satisfaction of being on one end of a crosscut saw, and the nomadism involved with the seasonal life. She tells her personal story well, and it's well worth spending time in her company.

The Sound Of Mountain Water: The Changing American West  
Wallace Stegner  
Penguin, 1997

Wallace Stegner is an American treasure, and one of the best writers the West has produced. You can start just about anywhere with Stegner's work. His novels are beautiful, and his nonfiction is as good as it gets. I chose this book because it contains his "Wilderness Letter," and you should read it.

Wild: From Lost To Found On The Pacific Crest Trail  
Cheryl Strayed  
Vintage Books, 2012

A young woman in her early twenties, at a rock bottom place in her life, decides to hike the Pacific Crest Trail. She has no experience with this sort of thing, and so she sets off alone. Adventure ensues, and so much more. Cheryl Strayed's book is written well, and I loved it.

Driven Wild: How The Fight Against Automobiles Launched The Modern Wilderness Movement  
Paul S. Sutter  
University Of Washington Press, 2002

This is a history of the conservation movement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He helps us understand some of the technological and social changes which gave rise to a wilderness movement. In twentieth century history, the rise of the automobile and roads and development are key to understanding those who fought for wilderness as an alternative.

Poetry Comes Up Where It Can: An Anthology

Edited By Brian Swann  
University Of Utah Press, 2000

This is another anthology of poems that originally appeared in a conservation-related periodical. In this case, these poems were published in *The Amicus Journal*, which was associated with the Natural Resources Defense Council. Brian Swann was the poetry editor, and this is a very nice collection which contains some of my favorite poems.

Walden; Or, Life In The Woods  
Henry David Thoreau  
Ticknor And Fields, 1854

At some point in your life, you have to wrestle with Henry. I read this book when I was 17 years old, and it has warped my thinking ever since. Not the easiest book to read; it's crammed full of ideas. You'll find yourself underlining passages, wondering how he got from here to there, and arguing with Henry frequently. Even if it takes you the rest of your life, read Henry's book. So much of what we think about with respect to the natural world came from Henry. In thinking about the wild as it exists in our world, he was way ahead of his time.

The Abstract Wild  
Jack Turner  
University Of Arizona Press, 1996

Over the past 10 years or so, I have put this book in the hands of more wilderness rangers than any other book, I think. Are we letting the idea of wildness get away from us? We really need to think about what we mean when we talk about wilderness, and the wild. The essays collected in this book, based on Jack Turner's travels and experiences, will help anyone wrestling with this.

The Promise Of Wilderness: American Environmental Politics Since 1964  
James Morton Turner  
University Of Washington Press, 2013

This book gives us not just a sense of the politics, but also the cultural and societal effects of the wilderness idea, since 1964. Turner gives us an idea of what has been accomplished, what is yet to be done, and where he thinks there are still issues to discuss.