

Staff Picks



Nature Writing

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could learn what it had to teach..." Thoreau penned these words in his classic Walden. Since then many authors have celebrated the natural world. Here are a few more to discover or to savor again.

Compiled by: Keith C.



A Conservationist Manifesto

Scott Russell Sanders 333.72 San

Local essayist and storyteller Sanders recommends that we all follow an "ark builder" ethic in which we live frugally, simply, and in accord with nature using as guides Native Americans and naturalists such as Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, and Carson. Sanders recommends that we undertake "a way of life that is worthy of our magnificent planet."



A Sand County Almanac

Aldo Leopold 508.7755 Le

In describing a Wisconsin riverside, this early ecologist argues for the value of all land: its worth is much greater than the merely economic. One of the most poignant memories that Leopold recalls here was as a rookie forest ranger killing a young wolf and watching "a fierce green fire dying in her eyes."



Build Me an Ark

Brenda Peterson 800.92 Peterson Pet

A wildlife expert who grew up on a national forest station describes her life with animals from the marine mammals of the Pacific Northwest to the wolves and bears of Alaska. Peterson describes herself as someone who has always lived "in the generous and instructive slipstream of other species."



Finding Beauty in a Broken World

Terry Tempest Williams 814.54 Wil

One of the best contemporary nature writers who often writes about the intermountain west tackles broader concerns here: life, death, and our relationship to a fragmented world.



Pilgrim at Tinker Creek

Annie Dillard LP 818 Di

A poet and essayist explores the natural history of one creek and in so doing teaches us how to really experience the world. Crystalline prose that captures one small part of North America.



The Birds of Heaven

Peter Matthiessen 598.32 Ma

In myths, cranes were known as messengers from heaven, but now eleven of fifteen species of these birds face extinction. The author traveled to China, Siberia, Africa, Australia and the US and met with scientists trying to save them. A book praising a magnificent bird.



The End of Nature

Bill McKibben 304.28 Mck

Never before in history have we humans possessed the ability to seriously harm life on our planet. This social scientist writes an eloquent plea for change to save Earth.



The Future of Life

Edward O. Wilson 333.9522 Wi

Written by a Pulitzer-prize winning evolutionary biologist, this book not only details the wonders of our fellow creatures, but presents a plan to save them. A practical call to action written by one of the world's leading scientists.



Under the Sea Wind

Rachel Carson 578.773 Car

This classic examination of marine biology was written by the woman whose book Silent Spring spurred the environmental movement.



Walden

Henry David Thoreau 818.3 Th

The granddaddy of them all. This pencil maker and conscientious objector to the Civil War has inspired thousands to learn about our planet and to work for its protection by describing a solitary stay by a pond near Boston.
