

BOOKS

Who should steward forests for people in the developing world? The government? Private landowners? Or the communities dependent on them for their livelihoods? In ***Mexico's Community Forest Enterprises: Success on the Commons and the Seeds of a Good Anthropocene*** (University of Arizona Press, 2020), David Barton Bray shares scientific evidence for Mexico's social and environmental achievements and how it became a global model for common property forest management, sustainable socioecological systems, and climate change mitigation in developing countries.

Sustainable forest management and how it led to taking a different approach to land ownership to make that possible is at the heart of Meng Zhang's ***Timber and Forestry in Qing China: Sustaining***

the Market (University of Washington Press, 2021). It became absolutely necessary during the Qing period (1644–1912), when China's population tripled and the demand for timber rose too. Though historians have often depicted it as an era of reckless deforestation, this comprehensive new study shows a more complex reality: innovative property rights systems and economic incentives that convinced landowners to invest years in growing trees emerged to develop renewable timber resources that provided a reliable source of timber for markets hundreds of miles distant in China's southwestern region. This history offers parallels to, and lessons to be learned about, today's concerns over deforestation, climate change, and global commodity trade.

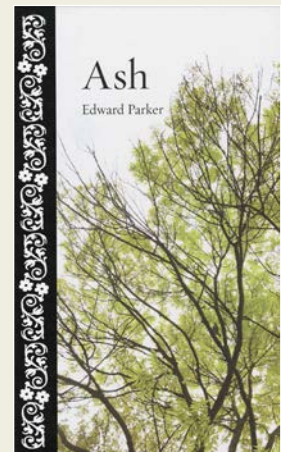
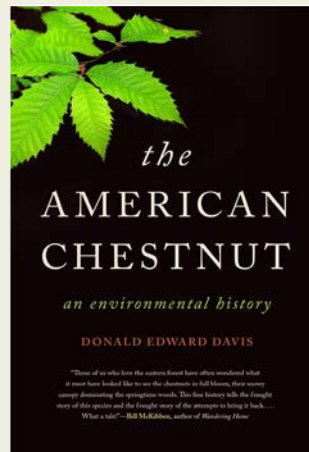
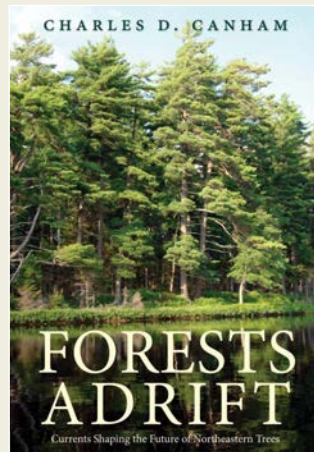
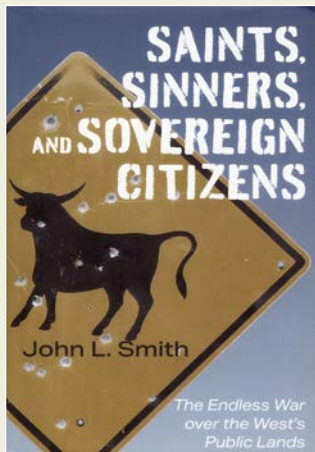
Brett J. Butler, a research forester with the U.S. Forest

Service, brings two decades of research experience to ***America's Family Forest Owners*** (Society of American Foresters, 2020). Collectively, family forest owners maintain 272 million acres, which is 39 percent of the total forestland in the United States—more than any other ownership group. His findings about the nature and state of America's family forests, ownership patterns and characteristics, landowners' attitudes, forest management practices, programs and policies, and future directions are essential for anyone who seeks to understand these important forestland owners.

The grazing rights battle between Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy and the federal government, which resulted in an armed standoff in 2014, garnered international media attention. Two books place the Bundy conflict

in the larger context of the Sagebrush Rebellion. This long-running effort to turn the West's federal public lands over to state or local control has at times enjoyed support from the White House and congressional leaders. The issues that led to it continue to simmer. Historian James R. Skillen's ***This Land is My Land: Rebellion in the West*** (Oxford University Press, 2020) examines the history of the conservative rebellion, while journalist John L. Smith's ***Saints, Sinners, and Sovereign Citizens: The Endless War over the West's Public Lands*** (University of Nebraska Press, 2021) offers the perspective of someone who witnessed the standoff.

As a forest ecologist, Charles D. Canham uses new theoretical models to predict how forest ecosystems in the northeastern United States



will change and adapt to various future scenarios. He concludes his book, **Forests Adrift: Currents Shaping the Future of Northeastern Trees** (Yale University Press, 2020), with the results. But first he looks at both the impermanence and the resilience of forest ecosystems in the Northeast, one of the most densely forested regions in the country, offering a historical perspective on logging, fire suppression, disease, air pollution, invasive species, and climate change since the arrival of European settlers.

Two iconic trees that at one time could be found throughout the Northeast and beyond are the subject of excellent studies. Donald Edward Davis's **American Chestnut: An Environmental History** (University of Georgia Press, 2021) and Edward Parker's **Ash** (Reaktion Books, 2021) offer rich histories of each and remind us of their roles

in shaping both the natural environment and material culture. Parker charts the evolution of this magnificent genus across the entire northern hemisphere from its origins 44 million years ago to its current 43 species. He also looks at topical issues threatening the survival of ash trees, such as the emerald ash borer beetle and the ash dieback fungal infection. Davis traces the history of *Castanea dentata* from Native American prehistory to the present, including recent attempts to genetically modify the species.

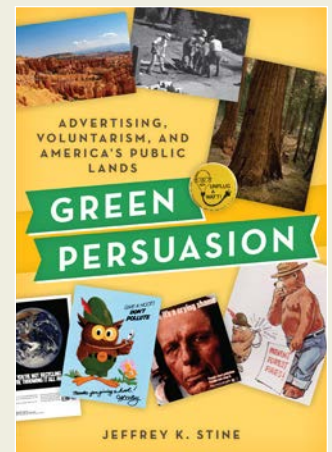
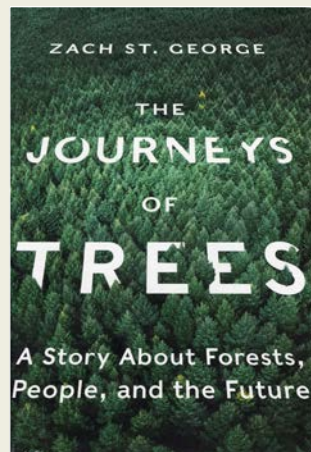
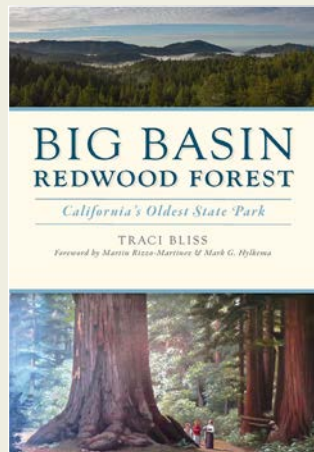
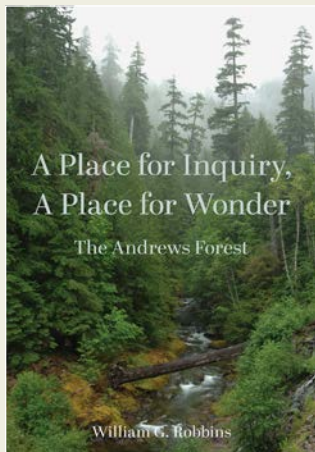
The H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest was founded in 1948 by the U.S. Forest Service due east of Eugene, Oregon, in the Cascade Mountains. It comprises almost 16,000 acres of the Lookout Creek watershed and, since 1980, has been part of the Long-Term Ecological Research network. In **A Place for Inquiry, A**

Place for Wonder: The Andrews Forest (Oregon State University Press, 2020), historian William G. Robbins sets the history of the Andrews Forest within the broader context of state and national affairs (such as the northern spotted owl controversy) and argues for its importance to environmental science and policy.

Established in 1902, Big Basin State Park is located just south of the San Francisco area. Its creation was the result of an unprecedented effort by the Golden State's citizenry. In **Big Basin Redwood Forest: California's Oldest State Park** (The History Press, 2021), Traci Bliss offers a beautifully illustrated history of that effort, as well as a discussion of ongoing issues with managing the park for public use such as recovery from the CZU Lightning Complex fires in August 2020.

Forests naturally migrate, but obstacles—humans, invasive species, and climate change—are interfering with that movement. In **The Journeys of Trees: A Story about Forests, People, and the Future** (W. W. Norton, 2020), Zach St. George, a science reporter, explores the evolving movements of forests by focusing on five trees around the world: giant sequoia, ash, black spruce, Florida torreya, and Monterey pine. The author meets people on conservation's front lines, from an ecologist studying drought to an evolutionary evangelist with plans to save a dying species. St. George treks through the woods with activists, biologists, and foresters, each with their own role to play in the fight for the uncertain future of our environment.

Jeffrey Stein's **Green Persuasion: Advertising, Voluntarism, and America's Public Lands** (Smithsonian Scholarly



Press, 2021; free at scholarlypress.si.edu) starts by tracing the history and evolution of volunteer-based public lands stewardship in the United States as well as the Advertising Council's work promoting environmental causes, such as the Smokey Bear campaign. The book's focus, though, is on the Take Pride in America program. Launched in 1985 by the Reagan administration and overseen by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Take Pride was a public relations effort used to deflect attention from the administration's controversial environmental record. It built on the volunteer tradition by giving more responsibilities to volunteers, even shifting paying jobs to volunteers while simultaneously limiting federal funding for environmental protection. Subsequent administrations have

revised, neglected, and readopted Take Pride in America; today, it still exists on paper but is not being promoted.

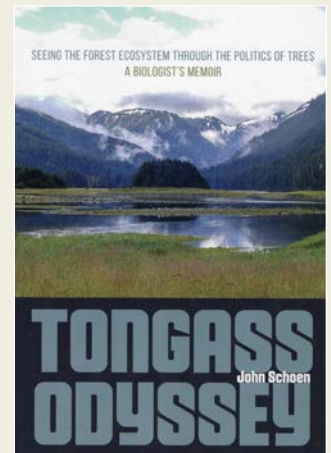
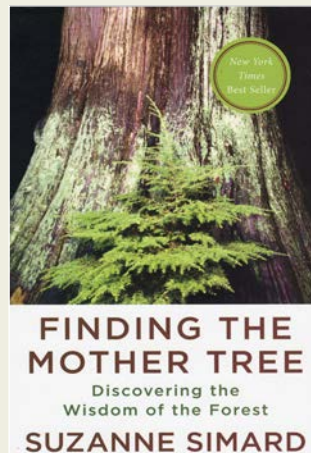
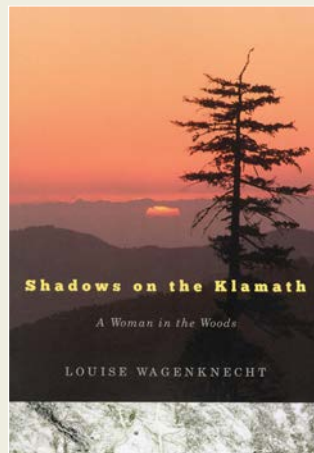
Of the thousands of wildland firefighters who battle California's blazes every year, roughly 30 percent of the on-the-ground wildland crews are inmates who can earn about five dollars a day. Approximately two hundred of those firefighters are women serving on all-female crews. Having spent years getting to know dozens of women in the fire camp program, Jaime Lowe provides an illuminating look at how the fire camps actually operate. In *Breathing Fire: Female Inmate Firefighters on the Front Lines of California's Wildfires* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021), Lowe captures California's underlying catastrophes of climate change, economic disparity, historical injustice, and

the emotional and physical intensity of firefighting.

With *Shadows on the Klamath: A Woman in the Woods* (Oregon State University Press, 2021), Louise Wagenknecht completes her trilogy about life in remote northwestern California. In this new work, she recounts her years in the U.S. Forest Service, starting as a clerical worker on the Klamath National Forest before moving to a field position where she did everything from planting trees to fighting fires. Her story is about a Forest Service in transition as forest management practices began to shift. Not least among the changes was the presence of women in the ranks—a change that many in the Forest Service resisted.

Three books mix memoir with scientific work. Suzanne Simard's *Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom*

of the Forest (Alfred A. Knopf, 2021) made headlines when published, and for good reason. It recounts the author's profound discoveries about communication among trees in the forest. Simard's research has demonstrated that trees are social, cooperative creatures connected through underground networks of roots and mycelium by which they communicate their vitality and vulnerabilities. They have communal lives, not entirely different from our own, and a complicated, interdependent cycle of life. At the center of their networks are the "mother trees": the mysterious, powerful matriarchal trees that connect and sustain the others that surround them. As a forest ecologist from a logging family in British Columbia, Simard also writes about her personal journey toward understanding who we are, where we fit in the



world, and how the mother trees nurture the forest in profound ways, much as families and societies maintain humankind.

In *Tongass Odyssey: Seeing the Forest Ecosystem through the Politics of Trees—A Biologist's Memoir* (University of Alaska Press, 2020), John Schoen offers stories related to his dealings in the Tongass National Forest. As a science-based manuscript, it addresses the ecological and political history of the past fifty years of the Tongass. It also considers the responsibility of conservation practitioners regarding the consequences of public lands and water management.

Conservation biologist, botanist, and conservationist Meg Lowman—aka “Canopy Meg”—has spent forty-plus years studying what is going on in tree canopies around the world, a place few

people have been and even fewer have studied. Her memoir, *The Arbornaut: A Life Discovering the Eighth Continent in the Trees Above Us* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021), takes us on an adventure into the unexplored “continent” of the world’s treetops.

Next are books for the young forest history enthusiast. First is the picture-book biography *Headstrong Hallie! The Story of Hallie Morse Daggett, The First Female “Fire Guard”* (Sleeping Bear Press, 2021), by Aimée Bissonette, for ages six to ten. In the early twentieth century, the U.S. Forest Service wouldn’t hire women to serve as fire lookouts, arguing they couldn’t handle the physical challenges of the work. On the Klamath National Forest in northern California, the man in charge of hiring had no good male candidates and, hesitantly, recommended

Hallie Morse Daggett for the job. As the first woman “fire guard” employed by the U.S. Forest Service, she served with distinction for fifteen seasons.

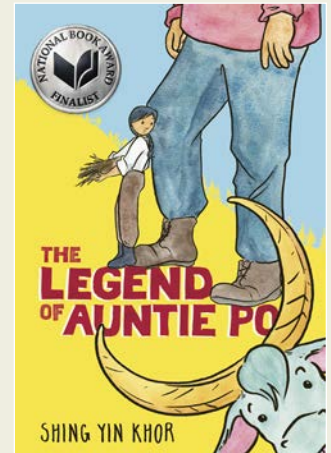
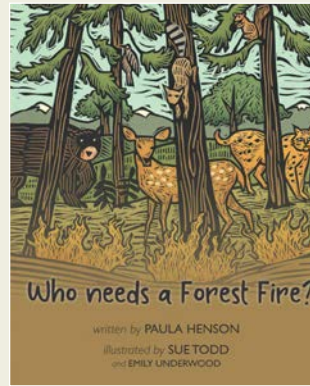
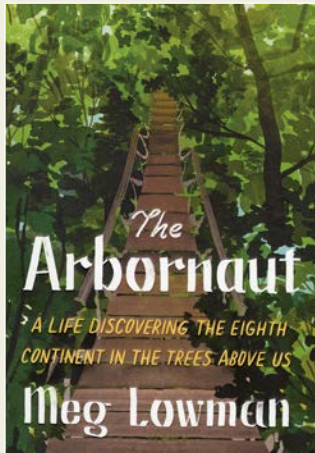
Paula Henson, a Los Angeles-based environmental educator, helps children ages five to nine understand the ecological role of wildfire in California in *Who Needs a Forest Fire?* (Terra Bella Books, 2021). Henson starts with how Native Americans used fire as a tool for thousands of years, then turns to the arrival of White settlers, who held opposite attitudes about fire. The imposition of a “no burn” policy by state and federal governments transformed the forest ecosystem, creating conditions that greatly contribute to today’s major wildfires. A teacher’s guide is available through the publisher’s website.

Shing Yin Khor’s graphic novel, *The Legend of*

Auntie Po (Penguin Random House, 2021), follows a 13-year-old Chinese American camp cook as she tells Paul Bunyan stories (reinvented as an elderly Chinese matriarch named Auntie Po) in a Sierra Nevada logging camp in 1885. Aimed at middle school-aged readers, this beautiful book (nominated for the National Book Award) brings to light underexamined aspects of logging camp life of that era, Chinese-American contributions to forest history, and issues of racial tumult following the Chinese Exclusion Act.

VISUAL MEDIA

Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) has a rich legacy in southern Louisiana. Its haunting beauty has inspired art, folklore, music, film, and advertising. More than a century ago, the Atchafalaya Basin swamp



contained the largest and oldest cypress forest in the country. Jason Theriot, an independent historian and consultant, has created the **Cypress Logging in the Atchafalaya Basin: A Digital History** to document the story of the cypress logging industry, using images, maps, records, and personal testimony of people who had a long association with cypress. The exhibit is at <https://tinyurl.com/mpbvuvv2>.

Haida artist Robert Davidson is an internationally lauded printmaker, painter, jeweler, and carver of totem poles and masks. The documentary **Haida Modern: The Art & Activism of Robert Davidson** (Shore Films, 2020) features candid conversations with Davidson, along with commentary from art historians, politicians, musicians, and family members detailing the

significance of Davidson's work. Central to the telling of Davidson's story is his carving the first totem pole raised on the island of Haida Gwaii in Canada's Pacific Northwest in more than a hundred years—a spiritual and political act credited with sparking a reawakening of Indigenous culture in the region and inspiring political activism involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens alike.

The Hidden Life of Trees (Constantin Film, 2020) is based on the bestselling book by the same name written by German forester Peter Wohlleben. The film explores his experience (and thesis) that trees are able to communicate with each other and are sentient, while offering breathtaking nature footage as viewers travel with him through Germany, Poland, Sweden, and Vancouver.

