
Today, the national parks are the subject of numerous book series, individual monographs, articles, and other public history projects, all of which owe a debt to Righter for laying the foundation for what has become a vibrant and exciting field of study.

Righter went on to write several more books covering a wide-ranging array of topics, such as mining towns in Wyoming, wind power, and the damming of the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park. But he has always returned to the Tetons. He published his second book on the region, Peaks, Politics, and Passion: Grand Teton National Park Comes of Age (2014), on the fiftieth anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Richly illustrated, the book picked up the story he first penned some thirty years prior by delving into the key issues facing the national park since its establishment. Reviewers praised Righter's combination of skillful and thoughtful writing with stunning landscape photographs in presenting the challenges of managing Grand Teton National Park to a public audience. Retired from his university job, Righter and his wife now call Grand Teton home. There, he volunteers at the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve welcoming visitors. The Tetons, he admits, are where he is most at home.

Righter's love of the region comes through in his latest book, The Grand Teton Reader. In it, he presents excerpts from his own research and reading over the past several decades on the Grand Teton region. Thematically divided into six parts, the book provides readers interesting in-
sights into both the region’s history and the ways Righter has come to understand his home. Part 1 introduces the origins of the Tetons, including a selection from geologists Robert Smith and Lee Siegel’s *The Geologic Story of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks* (2000) and Shone-Goshute descendent Line Thom’s telling of the “The Origins of the Snake and Yellowstone Rivers.” Part 2 includes writings from early Anglo visitors, such as Owen Wister and George Bird Grinnell. Part 3 pivots to the experiences of early settlers, including an essay by Sherry Smith on homesteader Geraldine Lucas. The shortest collection of essays, part 4 covers the preservation of the Teton Valley and includes excerpts from Margaret Murie, Margaret Sanborn, and Righter himself. Part 5 includes writings on the mountains that dominate the region. Finally, part 6 concludes the book with selections on the continued struggles over Grand Teton National Park.

Righter has selected an impressive array of writers, from Theodore Roosevelt to Terry Tempest Williams, who speak to the Tetons’ rugged beauty. It is clear after reading through each short excerpt why Righter has so long been drawn to this place. The Tetons are, without a doubt, one of the nation’s truly spectacular landscapes. More interestingly, the excerpts provide a window into Righter’s own understanding of the region’s history—of how he has come to frame not only the contested history of the establishment of Grand Teton National Park but also the area’s natural and cultural history. Reading these excerpts, you can almost hear Righter address visitors’ questions as he welcomes them to the park.

Righter concludes the reader with Todd Wilkinson’s 2006 essay, “Are We Paying Attention?” The Bozeman-based journalist known for his unabashed conservationist views, Wilkinson argues that we were squandering previous generations’ efforts to save these places. Our failure to address climate change and the region’s rampant growth and visitation threatened to undo all the work done by those like the Muries in saving the Grand Tetons. We must return to that past preservationist ethos, he concludes, if we are going to save this remarkable place.

Wilkinson’s words are an apt conclusion to the reader. Righter hopes his readers, like those he greets in the visitor center’s parking lot, come away knowing what they see and admire is a “paragon of natural forces” and also “the design of men and women working toward a noble cause” (p. xx). Those likely to pick up *The Grand Teton Reader* will certainly agree with Righter. But we should pause and ask why and for whom are we preserving the Grand Tetons? It is a difficult question. Righter’s selection of conservationists, ranchers, and Native people suggests his answer. But such a preservationist narrative provides an incomplete history.

As environmental historian Mary E. Mendoza argues, environmental history must think outside of its wilderness boxes.[1] National parks like Grand Teton have long been presented as those very boxes. This is particularly true when telling the histories of national parks. Are national parks truly embattled wildernesses? Does not the National Park Service’s mandate call for more than the preservation of iconic landscapes? Has the conservation narrative that has so long dominated environmental historiography really served us well in understanding the past and its impact on the present? Should we continue to privilege conservationists’ efforts over others? To be fair, Righter clearly argues we all should see and enjoy the Grand Tetons, but I wonder what other voices are missing from the essays in *The Grand Teton Reader*—a worthy question with several answers but one that we would not be pondering if not for Righter’s decades of work in helping lead us to consider national parks as serious topics of study. For that, we owe him a huge debt of gratitude and need to continue to build on the foundations he and others have laid.

Note

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