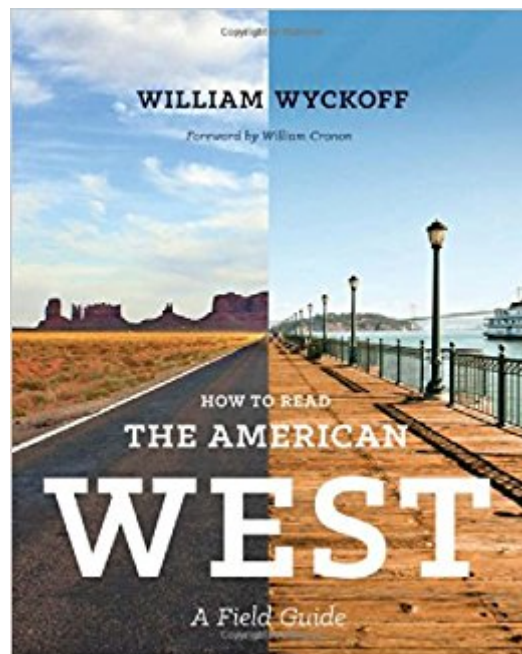




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How To Read The American West: A Field Guide (Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books)



Synopsis

From deserts to ghost towns, from national forests to California bungalows, many of the features of the western American landscape are well known to residents and travelers alike. But in *How to Read the American West*, William Wyckoff introduces readers anew to these familiar landscapes. A geographer and an accomplished photographer, Wyckoff offers a fresh perspective on the natural and human history of the American West and encourages readers to discover that history has shaped the places where people live, work, and visit. This innovative field guide includes stories, photographs, maps, and diagrams on a hundred landscape features across the American West. Features are grouped according to type, such as natural landscapes, farms and ranches, places of special cultural identity, and cities and suburbs. Unlike the geographic organization of a traditional guidebook, Wyckoff's field guide draws attention to the connections and the differences between and among places. Emphasizing features that recur from one part of the region to another, the guide takes readers on an exploration of the eleven western states with trips into their natural and cultural character. *How to Read the American West* is an ideal traveling companion on the main roads and byways in the West, providing unexpected insights into the landscapes you see out your car window. It is also a wonderful source for armchair travelers and people who live in the West who want to learn more about the modern West, how it came to be, and how it may change in the years to come. Showcasing the everyday alongside the exceptional, Wyckoff demonstrates how asking new questions about the landscapes of the West can let us see our surroundings more clearly, helping us make informed and thoughtful decisions about their stewardship in the twenty-first century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"[Wyckoff] encourages us to see with fresh eyes even as we're barreling down the interstate - to remember to think about the role of time in shaping a landscape, as well as the role of water. He asks us to think about who controls the landscape, and how these places have been shaped by different human interventions. . . . [How to Read the American West] is a marvelous springtime tonic for wanderlust and a wonderful invitation to see our surroundings in a new light." [Barbara Lloyd McMichael, Bellingham Herald](#) "A field guide unlike any other, with a focus on patterns, variations and the distribution of landscape features....it draws attention to eco-tones, watersheds, settlement patterns and corridors of connection...ultimately, it considers our grip on the land and the land's grip on us." [Michael Engelhard, High Country News](#) "If you like to travel the American West, put this book on your holiday gift list" [even the experienced Western traveler will come away with new ways to look at familiar places.](#)" [Carl Abbott, Oregon Historical Quarterly](#)

"Every coordinate on the landscape is much more than an intersection of longitude and latitude: it is a unique location representing the confluence of geography and geology, natural history and [probably most importantly](#) [human history](#). With its awe-inspiring canyons and imposing mountains, its mesmerizing distances and daunting deserts, the American West has been a meeting ground for diverse populations, a dreamscape upon which one group after another has left its distinctive mark. Across this vast terrain of time and space, William Wyckoff has uncovered patterns in the land and the people who have populated it" [and produced this handy field guide for those of us who choose to follow him.](#)" [Dayton Duncan, writer and producer of The National Parks: America's Best Idea](#) "If you want to get the most out of How to Read the American West, please wander its pages in a spirit of play, much as you would the landscape itself" [Once you can identify the various features that William Wyckoff puts before you in these pages, you'll be well on your way to reading the western landscape for yourself, with endless stories waiting to be discovered wherever you look.](#)" [William Cronon, From the foreword](#) "Creative, thoughtful, and compelling, How to Read the American West makes the reader think in new ways about the everyday landscape. It shows a deep and thoughtful knowledge of the diversity of the West, and the engaging 'eye' at work throughout is both trustworthy and provocative.

While most books ask you to engage primarily with the book, this book gets readers to engage with the landscape itself. The author has true expertise, but rather than providing all the answers and connections, he pushes readers to develop their own expertise and command of western landscapes."~Kathryn Morse, author of *The Nature of Gold*"I don't think there has ever been a field guide quite like this one. Created by one of the leading historical geographers in the United States and drawing on his far-flung travels and his skills as a photographer, it is a truly comprehensive guide to the American West."~William Cronon

Gave this to a good friend who regularly tours the West with his wife. He says it's a superb guide for their travels.

I had hoped to learn more detail than this treatment offers. Take the hay-beef economy which is so ubiquitous in the west. How much hay does an acre produce and how much beef might that yield? Or take timbering, what is the state of the industry today? No statistics are offered, just generalities. The short chapters are far too general to gain much insight that could not be had driving through the landscape without this book. It might be more meaningful for someone making their first trip west. The photos are well done with reasonable captions.

Great book! Had the chance to meet Professor Wyckoff and even based a class on this book! Fantastic photography and easy read!

Great read and absolutely beautiful photographs of the West. I haven't bought an actual book (as opposed to books on my iPad/kindle) in ages and this was worth it. Beautiful book and well done discussion of the American landscape.

I heard Wyckoff speak about a year ago and have wanted this book. Perfect shape. Arrived quickly. Interesting topic.

A fascinating read, well worth the money.

Timely delivery. Interesting reading. Wish I had had this book before my first trip out west

V. informative.

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