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### **Author**

Harner, Rebecca

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Peer reviewed

**Review: *These American Lands:  
Parks, Wilderness, and the Public Lands***

**By D. Zaslowsky, T.H. Watkins, and the Wilderness Society**

Reviewed by [Rebecca Harner](#)  
*Northern Arizona University*

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Zaslowsky, D., Watkins, T. H., and The Wilderness Society. THESE AMERICAN LANDS: PARKS, WILDERNESS, AND THE PUBLIC LANDS, Rev. and expanded ed. Washington, DC: Island Press, 1994. 398 pp. US\$22.00 paper ISBN: 1-55963-240-2. Recycled, acid-free paper.

Being a long-time supporter of National Parks, I was surprised at the amount of information new to me in THESE AMERICAN LANDS. I had no idea, for example, that there were public lands designated as "Wild and Scenic Rivers" and "National Trails," or that these were somehow separate from the National Park system. Indeed, THESE AMERICAN LANDS details the 634 million acres of public lands which include National Parks, National Forests, Wildlife Refuges, Bureau of Land Management lands, Alaska lands, designated wildernesses, Wild and Scenic Rivers and National Trails. One of the authors' goals was to provide a comprehensive look at public lands in one source. They achieved this without being too simplistic in this readable and entertaining book.

Each chapter is devoted to a different type of public land and begins with a history of how it came into existence, including all of the major legislation involved. A discussion on present usage of the land follows, as well as discussion on future directions, management decisions to be addressed, and ideas for land expansion. This information has been heavily revised and expanded from the 1984 edition; future editions should continue to update such valuable information as well.

One of the most interesting features of THESE AMERICAN LANDS is that its chapters read like stories, filled with little-known details of the conflicts and controversies occurring over the years. Speaking as a reference librarian, a particularly useful component of the book is the Appendix, which lists by name most of the public lands in the United States and provides useful details as to the state (or states) represented, the number of acres or miles involved, the responsible government agency, and the public land designation year. Appendix A is

unchanged from the earlier edition; Appendix B lists those public lands added since 1985. It would be a bit more helpful to have one complete and comprehensive listing, but, as it is, the Appendix is still functional.

THESE AMERICAN LANDS is biased toward conservationism, but such a bias is appropriate for a book of this nature. Readers interested in learning about our public lands, as well as scholars and legislators will find something of interest here. Definitely recommended for all libraries.

*Rebecca Harner <[Rebecca.Harner@nau.edu](mailto:Rebecca.Harner@nau.edu)> is a Reference Librarian at the Cline Library, at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona, USA.*