

for more localized food production, and correctly argues that merely urging privileged consumers to shop for local food will not be sufficient — we need supportive infrastructure and effective policy that overturn food insecurity. He identifies the importance of supply management for farm commodities. Yet given the remarkable fact that Farm Bureau and Farmers Union leaders have jointly embraced the concept of supply management for dairy in the throes of the dairy crisis — a crisis fueled by oversupply — Philpott neglects to highlight the farm groups that have championed this stance for decades. Rather, he speaks of Bernie Sanders’ support for the concept, without acknowledging how strenuously sustainable

agriculture groups had to work to inject this proposal into the Vermont Senator’s recent presidential campaign. This is not the best framing for opening a conversation about farm policy that needs to be farmer-led and bipartisan to win. Significantly, Philpott does not mention that global market conditions and the looming presence of the World Trade Organization make supply management both more difficult, and more costly, to implement than in the past. It is a strategy we need, but one that has to be reinvented for a new era.

For me, *Perilous Bounty* underscores the fact that there is no way to create effective policies for agriculture if we focus solely on farms. We have to address entire food systems in their complexity, and adopt policies that can flex in rapidly changing times.

Food businesses and public officials need to collaborate in building market power for farmers. Low-income residents must be engaged in creating answers. I hope that my forthcoming book, *Building Community Food Webs*, will complement Philpott’s fine work by adding a deeper economic perspective and documenting the growth of community foods efforts across the U.S. □

LSP member Ken Meter is one of the most experienced food system analysts in the country, working with 144 community partners in 41 states. His work can be found at www.crcworks.org. His book, Building Community Food Webs, will be published by Island Press in March.

Erosion Essays of Undoing

By Terry Tempest Williams
318 pages
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
www.coyoteclan.com

Reviewed by Dale Hadler

Erosion: *Essays of Undoing* is, as author Terry Tempest Williams explains, “a gathering of stories, poems, and pleas in the name of Beauty in an erosional landscape sculpted by wind, water, and time.” Williams, a native of Utah, may be the finest “Western” writer working today, but her latest work will appeal to anyone connected to a landscape that is being sculpted not just by natural forces, but by human activity, positive as well as negative.

During a highly productive career, Williams has addressed a wide range of political, environmental, and cultural issues, and how the three intertwine, often on a personal level. *Erosion* continues this theme as she writes eloquently about her experiences in various American national parks and monuments and her frustration and fear surrounding the anti-environmental stands of the Trump Administration. The war on the land is heartbreaking, but Williams is at her most poignant when she writes about her brother, Dan Dixon Tempest, and his tragic suicide stemming from years of mental illness and substance abuse issues.

Through the breadth of issues she addresses, Williams gives us a glimpse of her personal spirituality, which she describes as being based on humanity’s relationship with the natural world. To a large extent,

this spirituality is a reaction against the very conservative faith of her Mormon childhood. Williams makes it clear that upbringing was too restrictive for her, but she also credits the Mormon Church with connecting her to nature in the first place through outings to nearby national parks like Mesa Verde and Canyonlands.

Williams is no mere observer — she also describes her own work to preserve the flora and fauna of the West, as well as to protect endangered species such as prairie dogs near Grand Teton National Park.

She is at her best when she describes the public lands she loves so passionately. In fact, I would highly recommend reading *Erosion* in conjunction with Williams’ 2016 book, *The Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America’s National Parks*. Together, these two books make a compelling argument for the preservation of public lands in the face of threats posed by federal policies that are opening them up to development that will produce short-term gains with long-term, negative consequences.

These policies, she argues, are stripping future generations of a public land inheritance that belongs to all Americans. In spite of these myriad threats, the author believes this inheritance can be preserved. While visiting Great Falls National Park outside of Washington, D.C., she observes: “Standing at Great Falls on a hot humid day when the

political temperature in Washington registered like a fever, an uncommon peace came over me. I allowed myself to believe that in another hundred years, there will be others standing on this same brink of beauty, grateful for all that remains wild and wholesome and free.”

How does someone so aware of the threats our ecosystem faces find it in themselves to feel so optimistic? For Terry Tempest Williams, such inner strength comes not just from the land itself, but from the inhabitants who live in harmony with it.

That’s an important lesson to keep in mind as we here in the Midwest struggle to create farming systems that take their cue from the land and all the beauty it can offer. As Williams observes during the great sandhill crane migration while

crouched in a blind on Nebraska’s Platte River: “Through the open window framing and focusing our attention, we saw what survival looks like in the shimmering light of awe.” □

Land Stewardship Project member Dale Hadler lives in southeastern Minnesota.

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