

*Introduction to New and
Alternative Religions in
America*

**Volume 5: African Diaspora Traditions and Other
American Innovations**

*Edited by Eugene V. Gallagher and
W. Michael Ashcraft*



2006

GREENWOOD PRESS

Westport, Connecticut • London

New and Alternative Nature Religions in America

Bron Taylor and Joseph Dylan Witt

On April 22, 1970, millions of Americans gathered in communities across the country to celebrate the nation's first Earth Day. Invented to raise national awareness of what organizers considered an intensifying environmental crisis, Earth Day was a watershed in the emergence of ecological awareness in the United States and beyond. Earth Day can also be considered an important moment in which nature religion gained new prominence, for on this day and in subsequent celebrations, large numbers of Americans and others around the world came together in a mass ritual both implicitly and explicitly expressing a perception that there was something sacred about the biosphere and that people have an ethical obligation to treat life on earth with reverent care.

The importance of Earth Day to the environmental movement is well known, but its relationship to nature religion is less often considered. Also less well known are the ways in which environmental awareness coevolved with a wide range of nature-related spirituality, the forms of which are diverse, continually evolving, and mutually influential. Also obscure to most are the ways in which this kind of dynamic new religious production in the United States draws on organicist, romantic, and esoteric forms of religion with deep roots in western history, and that one cannot fully understand these western streams without appreciating the important if not decisive influence upon them by their encounter with Asian religious cultures.

This sense of the sacred in nature, what Catherine Albanese called the "natural dimension" of religion, is so diverse in the United States that no single treatment can be comprehensive.¹ In what follows we hope to arouse the reader's curiosity about influences on nature religion as well as the diverse contemporary echoes of them in nature religions today. While our effort spotlights trends and phenomena in North America, many if not all of what is discussed here have kindred expressions elsewhere.

We begin by introducing some of the religious and philosophical streams that most directly affected nature religion, as well as environmental activism, before turning to specific examples, some of which may be surprising to consider as new or

alternative forms of nature religion, just as it may be surprising to consider Earth Day as an annual rite celebrating the sacredness of the Mother Earth, which promotes environmental action in defense of it, and has been growing into an expression of a global, civic, earth religion.

NATURE RELIGION IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND AMERICAN HISTORY

Beginning in the sixteenth century, the idea that religion can be explained only by reference to a divine creator who reveals himself to believers has been increasingly challenged in the West. A wide variety of theories regarding the origins of religion emerged, many of which took a decidedly naturalistic turn, explaining religion as the result of natural processes. Scholars increasingly assumed that explanations that worked best were naturalistic, not dependent on divine fiat.²

By the late nineteenth century theorizing about the origins of religion was most notably represented in E. B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871), F. Max Müller's *Natural Religion* (1888), Emile Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1922) and *The Worship of Nature* (1926), and Mircea Eliade's *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (1958). Many of these works analyzed so-called "primitive religions," which involved animism (viewing natural objects or places as imbued with spirits) or totemism (in which objects or entities have specific spiritual meaning for individuals or tribes) and were observable in indigenous and traditional communities. These scholars sought universal origins of religious belief in the myths and practices of ancient and indigenous peoples. Some of them, like Eliade and many of his intellectual progeny, assumed that there *was* something sacred in nature, for it seemed universal that some people apprehended the presence of the sacred within it, at least at special times and places. This kind of perception influenced many religion scholars, whose work subtly suggested just such a spirituality, which in turn helped to shape the religious perceptions and the nature-related spirituality of a variety of individuals and religious groups that followed.³

Although such an approach has been sharply criticized by scholars expounding Marxism, postmodernism, and postcolonial theory, who suggest that such perspectives camouflage the ways theories of religion serve the interests of powerful social sectors, it is nevertheless possible to analyze forms of religion that have affinities with those who perceive nature to be sacred in some way. A watershed in such scholarship can be found in Catherine Albanese's *Nature Religion in America: From the Algonkian Indians to the New Age* (1990) and *Reconsidering Nature Religion* (2002), which illustrate some of the diverse ways in which nature-focused religions in the United States draw on and manipulate nature, even while sometimes considering it to be explicitly sacred. In other words, nature is seen as sacred in itself, not only in some indirect sense by virtue of having been created by a divine being. For Albanese, nature religion is a system of orientations based in nature or natural themes, a trope for all religious phenomena in which nature is an important religious symbol or conceptual

resource, whether or not the individuals involved in it consider nature to be sacred.

Albanese argues that focusing on "nature religion" as she understands it has value because it reveals important beliefs and practices that are often ignored in American religious history but that have great power both for individuals and their societies. She cites numerous examples including the Transcendentalists, represented by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), the nineteenth-century popular fictional stories of Davy Crockett, the wilderness writings of John Muir (1838–1914), and several nineteenth- and twentieth-century natural health movements, to name just a few. In Albanese's understanding, each of these examples represents a specific orientation toward the natural world based on certain values, each helping to constitute American nature religion.

American nature religion, though, also involves more unpleasant features. Albanese argues that although it is commonly thought to promote social and ecological well-being, American nature religion often masks an impulse to dominate nature as well as other people. She says, "the impulse to dominate was, in fact, everywhere in nature religion."⁴ Notions of harmony and the rural ideal, for Albanese, masked or intentionally supported the domination of Native American peoples. Deistic republican ideology from the eighteenth century, which she understood also as a form of nature religion, buttressed the pernicious ideology of "manifest destiny," the belief common to many nineteenth-century Americans that the United States had a mission to take over territory in the New World and spread its political and religious values.⁵

It is worth considering all of the phenomena that she examined as new or alternative forms of nature religion, at least if we consider as "new" religious production that which has unfolded since the arrival of people of European ancestry and consider valid Albanese's broad definition of nature religion.

While Albanese's work significantly influenced the study of nature religion, at the time she was publishing the first of her books about it, another scholarly approach, although not entirely new, began to gather momentum and influence. In 1990, a number of scholars proposed to the American Academy of Religion (AAR), the major professional organization in the United States for religion scholars, the formation of a "Religion and Ecology" focused subgroup that would present scholarly papers at annual meetings of the AAR. Sparked in part by a growing chorus of criticism by environmentalist scholars who held one or more religions responsible for environmental decline, the aim of the new group was in no small measure to explore and promote environmentally friendly aspects of the world's largest religious traditions.

The first meeting of the group represented a landmark in the emergence of a sub-field of religious studies that became known, most commonly, as "Religion and Ecology." Soon, additional scholarly groups emerged that operated in concert with this approach. The Forum on Religion and Ecology, for example, led and shaped by then Bucknell University professors Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, held a series of conferences at Harvard University that focused on the world's major religious traditions and ecological matters and was a watershed in gathering scholars to focus

on the obstacles to and resources within religious traditions for environmentally beneficent behaviors. These conferences were the seedbed of a landmark Harvard University Press book series entitled *Religions of the World and Ecology*, published between 1997 and 2003. Meanwhile, the Religion and Ecology group grew and diversified its interests and solidified its place as a legitimate branch of religious studies scholarship.⁶

These developments are mentioned to recognize the role that many of the scholars involved in these endeavors played in promoting various types of green or nature religion. They did so sometimes by working up greener (more nature-friendly) forms of existing religions. At other times they promoted greener values by helping to create fertile cultural soil in which newer forms of nature-revering religiosity can more easily spring forth. A good example of both trends is the Earth Charter, an international document of environmental and social rights and values.

The Canadian Maurice Strong (b. 1929) proposed the Earth Charter at the 1992 "World Summit on Environment and Development," sponsored by the United Nations, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Many international communities and nongovernmental and religious organizations aided in the document's drafting until its presentation at the 2002 "World Summit on Sustainable Development" held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Prominent supporters of the Earth Charter included Mikhail Gorbachev (b. 1931), former leader of the Soviet Union, who once said, "I believe in the cosmos ... nature is my god. To me, nature is sacred. Trees are my temples and forests are my cathedrals."⁷ As president of Green Cross International, Gorbachev remains very active and influential in international environmental activist circles while Strong and others continue to seek support from nations and organizations for the tenets of the Earth Charter. In a way that was carefully crafted to not offend people from the world's largest religious traditions (especially those historically hostile to nature religions of any sort), The Earth Charter called for a renewed sense of reverence for the community of life on earth, as well as for greater equity in human cultures. The strategy underlying the effort was to kindle such reverence and to influence the leaders of international institutions including corporations, the United Nations, and its member states, so that they would consider it a sacred duty to promote environmentally sustainable and socially just societies.⁸

Calls for a greening of world religions have also been strongly made by modern philosophers and ethicists. In *The Idea of Wilderness* (1991), Max Oelschlaeger argued for the acceptance of the ecologically beneficent lifeways of "Paleolithic" peoples.⁹ In this work, Oelschlaeger expressed his hope for a return to the ecological attitudes of prehistoric peoples. However, in a later work, *Caring for Creation* (1994), Oelschlaeger revealed significant versatility, assembling a case for the greening of Christianity.¹⁰ Nevertheless, while he considers the development of "green Christianity" to be critical at this historic moment, he clearly sees it as more an interim ethic than an environmental antidote, subtly expressing his ultimate hope for a passage from "textual religiosity several thousand years old" to new religious forms inspired by Paleolithic spiritual sensibilities, that "connected rather than separated" people from the wider web of life.¹¹

Another prominent philosopher, J. Baird Callicott, called for a greening of world religions as well. In *Earth's Insights: A Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (1994), Callicott identified resources for and obstacles to ecologically friendly behavior in cultures and religious traditions from around the world.¹² Yet he also argued that these traditions should be updated to cohere with evolutionary science, and ultimately expressed his desire to see "superstitious," otherworldly religions recede and a "religion of natural history," drawing on the spiritual aesthetics of figures like the American ecologist Aldo Leopold (1886–1948), to assume increasing influence.¹³

The scholarly study of the relationship between religion and nature has been an important component of religious studies, and often the line separating religious studies, philosophy, philosophies of nature, and the construction of new forms of nature religion is very blurry.¹⁴ Given this assertion, let us now consider a few interesting points in the history of nature religion since Europeans arrived in North America.

In a now-classic work, *Wilderness in the American Mind* (1967), Roderick Nash traced the complex and ambivalent relationships of European Americans to the North American landscape and concluded that as wild places became scarcer they became increasingly valued and were considered sublime or sacred. He noted also that these trends were shaped by philosophical and artistic trends in Europe, especially the Romantic movements. In later editions of this work, he became increasingly forthcoming, expressing his own fidelity to wilderness and the value of considering it sacred, even while retaining his postmodern sensibility that such spirituality was historically contingent, constructed, and sometimes carried with it real dangers.¹⁵

By way of contrast, John Gatta published *Making Nature Sacred* in 2004, and contrary to Nash found evidence of deep spiritual reverence for nature among some of the earliest Euro-Americans, including Puritans such as William Bradford, Cotton Mather, and Anne Bradstreet.¹⁶ Bradford and Mather believed that God spoke through two books, the Bible and the "book of nature." Therefore, according to Gatta, these figures believed God's laws and moral teachings could be learned through observation of the natural world. But while having differing perceptions about how much nature reverence there was among early American Puritans and others, like Nash, Gatta's own affinity for nature spirituality is woven into his scholarly work in various ways, and he also found it to be salutary and important as he thought about the possibility of constructing ecologically sustainable societies.

BIOCENTRIC NATURE RELIGION

These works by Nash and Gatta, which differ over how much spiritual connection to nature early Europeans may have had, nevertheless converge in their clear if subtle promotion of nature religion and provide an interesting framework for looking back at some of the major events in the evolution of what we might call biocentric nature religion. "Biocentric" means nature religion that considers nature to be sacred in

some way and all species of life to have intrinsic value, a right to be here, and worthy of reverent protection.

We have already alluded to Nash's contention that the earliest European pioneers viewed the wilderness as a place both to fear and overcome. The love of wilderness, in his reading, developed first with "the literary gentleman wielding a pen, not the pioneer with his axe" and drew on philosophical positions popular in Europe, such as Edmund Burke's theories of aesthetics and the sublime in his *Philosophical Enquiry Into the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), and the Romantic Primitivist philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.¹⁷

Scholars have also noted that many Americans, including most prominently Thomas Jefferson, promoted what Albanese called "Republican nature," namely, the idea that the rural is ideal, that it has many moral, patriotic, and spiritual virtues, including a reverence for the American landscape.¹⁸ Jefferson once wrote, for example, that "those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God."¹⁹ For colonialists such as Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, the spiritual orientation of Deism fostered positive spiritual attitudes toward nature. Combining the "book of nature" theory with Enlightenment ideas of scientific rationalism, Deists believed that observation of the natural world revealed God's rational order of the universe.

Influenced by theories of the sublime, Romanticism, and Deism, as well as by Vedantic/Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, Transcendentalism emerged in the mid-1800s as another spiritual and philosophical system concerning nature. Transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau promoted a philosophy in which the spiritual realm can tell us what we most need to know about life. Importantly, the natural environment served as a source for both material and spiritual knowledge. Thoreau famously tested this epistemological idea during his time spent at Walden Pond. In *Walden* (1854), Thoreau said of his retreat, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."²⁰

While Emerson and Thoreau advocated deep respect for nature, Transcendentalism did not develop a fully biocentric nature religion. Emerson's thought emphasized the ideal over the material, to the detriment of placing a clear priority on the value of nature for its own sake. As Gatta said, "Emerson's Transcendental Idealism threatens to turn nature finally into another, albeit richly ennobling, form of 'Commodity' and human creation."²¹

Despite such ambivalences, the Transcendentalists played a central role in the early phases of the evolution of what Nash called the "wilderness cult"—the romantic desire to preserve American wildlands.²² This cult, catapulted decisively forward through the work of a Scottish immigrant named John Muir, played a major role in a kind of generic, civic nature religion, which in turn went on to have great impact globally. This kind of nature religion involves the demarcating of national parks and other wildland reserves, both implicitly and explicitly, as "sacred places," to which nature religionists (tourists and outdoor enthusiasts) would naturally make pilgrimage.²³ Muir also became the most important patron saint of American biocentric,

nature religion, and his biography often blurs into hagiography in the typical recitation.

Born in Dunbar, Scotland, in 1838, Muir moved with his family to Wisconsin at 11 years of age. Through childhood, Muir worked on the family farm under a strictly authoritarian father and revealed talents for machinery. While studying the sciences at the University of Wisconsin, Muir came under the tutelage of geologist Ezra Carr and discovered the works of German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt, Emerson, and Thoreau. After an 1867 factory accident nearly took his eyesight, Muir decided to devote his life, in whatever way he could find, to his first love—the wild. He said of his accident and the resulting epiphany, “God has to nearly kill us sometimes to teach us lessons.”²⁴ Intending to travel to Mexico, Muir walked from Indiana to Cedar Key, Florida (his famous 1,000-mile walk to the gulf). However, while waiting for a ship to south Texas, Muir became extremely ill with an undiagnosed fever, possibly malaria. After recovering in Florida, Muir went to California and soon found the Sierra Nevada Mountains and Yosemite Valley. Through the 1870s, Muir traveled throughout California and Alaska, conducting research and writing on his spiritual experiences gained in the wild.²⁵

In some of his writings, Muir retained the language of his Christian upbringing. The world was a place of revelation, where one came closest to God. Writing of a mountain stream in “My First Summer in the Sierra,” Muir said, “the place seemed holy, where one might hope to see God.”²⁶ Of the Sierra Mountains in general, Muir said, “everything in it seems equally divine—one smooth, pure, wild glow of Heaven’s love.”²⁷ However, as he moved farther from his Wisconsin home, Muir moved away from the Christianity of his authoritarian father and developed more mystical, pantheist (or viewing the world as representative of a transcendent god), and even animistic spiritual expressions. After finding a rare orchid, Muir said, “I never before saw a plant so full of life; so perfectly spiritual. It seemed pure enough for the throne of the Creator. I felt as if I were in the presence of superior beings who loved me and beckoned me to come. I sat down beside them and wept for joy.”²⁸ And Muir explicitly expressed a biocentric view of nature in his essay “Cedar Key,” writing “the world, we are told, was made especially for man—a presumption not supported by all the facts.”²⁹

In “Wild Wool” Muir celebrated the quality and usefulness of wild sheep wool over domesticated varieties, concluding, “a little pure wildness is the one great present want, both of men and sheep.”³⁰ Indeed, for him domesticated animals, including humans, were inferior, even desecrated beings, in comparison to their wilder cousins.

Muir also understood and celebrated the wild as a place of danger. He faced death several times in his travels, including once while climbing California’s Mount Ritter and another time while crossing an Alaskan glacier. However, this danger only added to Muir’s love of the wild and heightened his spiritual experiences there. Reflecting upon Alaska, Muir said, “I never have held death in contempt, though in the course of my explorations I have oftentimes felt that to meet one’s fate on a noble mountain, or in the heart of a glacier, would be blessed as compared with death from disease, or

from some shabby lowland accident.”³¹ This sentiment would be repeated in the later works of others who became saint-like figures in American biocentric nature religion, such as Robinson Jeffers (1887–1962) and Edward Abbey (1927–1989).³²

Muir remains best known as the founder of the Sierra Club, an organization devoted to the preservation of wild and ecologically valuable places. As a popular and widely read writer during his day, Muir held the attention of Americans across the country and promoted issues of preservation to persons who otherwise had no contact with remote western wilderness areas. In 1890, Muir successfully petitioned Congress for the formation of Yosemite National Park. Shortly thereafter, in 1892, Muir and a few others formed the Sierra Club to organize preservation efforts and promote the protection of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Muir served as the club's president until his death. He remained an active public figure, meeting with government officials such as the nation's first Chief Forester, Gifford Pinchot. However, Muir broke with Pinchot following differences regarding land use. As a biocentric thinker, Muir argued that wild lands should remain untouched by humans. Pinchot, on the other hand, believed that natural areas should be preserved as stores of resources to be tapped when necessary. This marked the important distinction in American environmental history between biocentric nature religionists like Muir, who sought to preserve the wild in pristine and untouched states, and utilitarian conservationists, like Pinchot who believed natural resources should be protected for the benefit of humans, not because of their intrinsic or spiritual value.

While Muir articulated early biocentric appeals for the preservation of wilderness, the environmental movement received perhaps its first great biocentric philosophy, which should also be understood as a watershed in the development of nature religion in the United States, in Aldo Leopold's land ethic (the ethic that decisively influenced Callicott, whose scholarship was noted above).

Leopold worked as a forester with the United States Department of Forestry from the 1910s to his death in 1948. While doing so, he recorded his changing attitudes toward the earth in journals that became the basis for his now famous, posthumously published, *Sand County Almanac* (1949). In this work, Leopold revealed a spiritual orientation toward the natural world and articulated his idea of a biocentric ethic for human interactions with the land.

As a young forester, Leopold's journals reveal, he was ambivalent toward the natural world. He had a precocious sense of wonder about nature, but viewed nature in much the same way as many people of his day. However, while working with some fellow foresters in the southwest, Leopold experienced a conversion to biocentric spirituality. In a famous and moving passage from *A Sand County Almanac*, he recounted this experience. Resting with his forester comrades, he saw a mother wolf and her pups walking a short distance away,

In those days we had never heard of passing up a chance to kill a wolf. In a second we were pumping lead into the pack, but with more excitement than accuracy: how to aim a steep downhill shot is always confusing. When our rifles were empty, the old wolf was down, and a pup was dragging a leg into impassable slide-rocks. We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have

known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes—something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.³³

Witnessing the green fire die in the wolf's eyes forced Leopold to completely reevaluate his ideas regarding the natural world. This experience marked Leopold's turn to a biocentric world view.

In *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold called for a radical revision of human attitudes toward the world and criticized Abrahamic religions for evincing so little sense of the sacredness in nature. Like Muir, Leopold emphasized the intrinsic value of nature and at the same time promoted it as a place necessary for healthy human personality formation. He even intimated that American freedom required wild places, saying "of what avail are forty freedoms without a blank spot on the map?"³⁴ In another example expressing a natural, spiritual epistemology, Leopold wrote, "there are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace."³⁵

His thought culminated in the final part of *A Sand County Almanac* entitled "The Upshot." Here, Leopold explained the spiritual and philosophical attitudes necessary to preserve wild places. For Leopold, this meant the land ethic, or as he formulated it, "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."³⁶ In other words, the preservation of ecological stability remained the goal of human actions. This biocentric view sharply contrasted with other more anthropocentric views which claimed that human needs trumped those of other species. While Leopold remained largely unknown during his own lifetime, *A Sand County Almanac* became a critical source for the twentieth-century environmental movement, influencing many later writers, theorists, and activists. And Curt Meine, his biographer, has uncovered through interviews with Leopold's family members strong evidence that if he had tried to label himself religiously, he would probably have called himself a pantheist, in other words, one who considered the earth (or universe) itself to be sacred, if not divine, in some way.³⁷

Working roughly contemporaneously with Leopold, Rachel Carson (1907–1964) provided another major voice to the growing American environmental movement. Her importance to that movement is well known. Less well known is her own nature-embedded spirituality, which she kept relatively quiet in order to not give her enemies in the chemical industry and elsewhere more ammunition to attack her credibility.

Carson worked as a marine biologist at the Woods Hole oceanographic research institute in Massachusetts where she published several best-selling books on sea biology, including *Under the Sea Wind* (1949), *The Sea Around Us* (1951), and *The Edge of the Sea* (1955). In these early works, Carson expressed a spiritual devotion to the ocean, celebrating its cycles of death and rebirth. It was not until her publication of *Silent Spring* in 1962, however, that she solidified her place among the

most influential writers of the American conservation movement. How did this occur?

After World Wars I and II, the American government sought to redirect military and industrial power in ways that would not erode economic growth. This was done by diverting the wartime chemical and weapons industries toward civil ends, such as agriculture. Factories originally built to create poisonous gases shifted to the production of herbicides and pesticides. The creation of these new products corresponded with massive advertising campaigns that promoted the everyday usefulness of chemicals such as DDT, malathion, and parathion. Americans largely accepted these claims, and the chemical industry expanded dramatically. However, scientists soon noticed changes in biotic behaviors and reproduction. After years of careful research and observation, Carson concluded that such chemicals were causing massive species declines, especially of insects and birds.

She devoted herself to proving the harmful effects of agricultural chemicals, publishing *Silent Spring* in 1962, which articulated a stunning critique of the emerging chemical culture and called for the recognition of the intrinsic value of all species. The spirituality revealed in her early work and little known talks to women's groups, combined with her clearly stated biocentric ethics, makes it clear that she too is an iconic figure in American biocentric nature religion.³⁸ Though she died of cancer in 1964, Carson's work, like Leopold's, greatly affected the growth of the American environmental movement and later radical environmentalists. Its spiritual aspects will likely exert more influence, as they become better known, and as more Carson-focused scholarship is published.

Of course, philosophies and spiritualities promoting the intrinsic value of nature continued after Leopold and Carson. Only two years after the first Earth Day, the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess (b. 1912) coined the term "deep ecology" at a conference in Bucharest, Romania. He followed with a 1973 article entitled "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology and Movements." Naess explained deep ecology as an understanding of the intrinsic value of nature, or the worth of nature beyond any use to humans. He defined this in opposition to the "shallow ecology" of some environmentalists who preserved nature for purely utilitarian ends. This somewhat resembled the earlier preservationist-conservationist debate between Muir and Pinchot. While deep ecology promoted biocentrism, Naess insisted that there was a plurality of possible paths to deep ecology. He called these individual paths "ecosophies" and defined his own as Ecosophy T, after his beloved mountain home in Norway. Ecosophies could also include insights from various religious traditions. In addition to nature itself, Naess found inspiration in the monistic pantheism of philosopher Baruch Spinoza as well as in Mahatma Gandhi's notion of self-realization. What is clear about deep ecology, as well as the movements and groups that are its social carriers, is that it involves a deeply spiritual biocentrism, which has become an influential form of biocentric nature religion, both in the United States and beyond.³⁹

This is also clear when examining the various forms of ritualizing invented and spread by participants in the deep ecology movements. The most important such

ritualizing has been the Council of All Beings, created by Joanna Macy (b. 1929) and John Seed (b. 1946). Macy and Seed, both environmental activists and Buddhist practitioners, created the Council of All Beings in a series of workshops held in Seed's native Australia.⁴⁰ This ritual, which is very popular among environmentalists and some religious groups, requires each participant to identify as a natural being or entity, such as an animal, plant, river, or mountain. Through this identification, participants develop a more intense spiritual connection to natural processes and other forms of life.⁴¹

Many deep ecologists also subscribe to a green social philosophy known as bioregionalism, which received its most important early formulation in 1969 when the poet/essayist Gary Snyder (b. 1930) published *Turtle Island*, which became especially influential after he received a Pulitzer Prize for it. Bioregionalists believe that local products and small communities based around natural features such as watersheds instead of arbitrary political designations provide the best solutions for living on the earth.

Many bioregionalists are ardent environmental activists and hope that, by building the movement, they will generate more activism. In 1984, David Haenke organized the first North American Bioregional Congress (NABC) in Missouri. This Congress brought together local groups and individuals in order to spread and solidify key bioregional ideas, though with priorities still given to regional needs over any forced generalizations of bioregionalist principles. In subsequent years, the NABC added explicitly spiritual activities. In 1986, David Abram sponsored a petition to include representatives of other species at the meetings. This led to a process resembling the Council of All Beings ritual, where individuals took on the personae of these different species. Later Congresses also held rituals based on Native American and European pagan traditions.

As the bioregional theorist Michael Vincent McGinnis put it, "the goal of bioregionalism is to reimmerge the practices of human community (religion, art, theater, institutional building) within the bioregions that provide their material support."⁴² While there is no officially endorsed form of nature spirituality in bioregional subcultures, the immersion McGinnis refers to generally includes spiritual experiences of connection to nature and yields biocentric values. These movements thus provide another good example of American biocentric nature religion.⁴³

Themes of nature religion appear frequently throughout American history, from the Republican nature of some colonialists, to the biocentrism of Muir, Leopold, and Carson, to the spiritual orientations of deep ecology and bioregionalism. Rather than representing freestanding traditions, these themes interact with each other and with other spiritual orientations, from mainstream to countercultural, to produce the multiple expressions of nature religion found in the United States today.

We conclude by examining two additional examples of American nature religion that may have more in common than practitioners in either subculture might think. Moreover, looking at them may suggest some future directions regarding the future importance of nature religion.

NATURE RELIGION IN PAGAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND OUTDOOR RECREATION ENCLAVES

Deep ecology, bioregionalism, and other green spiritualities regularly fuse with aspects of Pagan, New Age, Native American, and other spiritual traditions among many environmental activists.⁴⁴

While Pagan (sometimes also called Neopagan)⁴⁵ and New Age traditions frequently interact, there exist some basic differences among their features. As Sarah Pike notes, "Neopagan practices highlight the centrality of the relationship between humans and nature and reinvent religions of the past, while New Agers are more interested in transforming individual consciousness and shaping the future."⁴⁶ Rather than distinguishing between New Age and Paganism, Adrian Ivakhiv prefers to characterize both along a continuum of belief between "ascensionism," or the spiritual concern for the future and other worlds, and "ecospirituality," or the spiritual concern for this planet at this time.⁴⁷ While the New Age tends more toward ascensionism and Paganism toward ecospirituality, the lines are often blurred. However, these groups both have continuity with nineteenth-century new religious developments such as Theosophy and Spiritualism, and they both emphasize personal authority and ritual over belief and dogma.⁴⁸ Along with the "nineteenth century spiritual hothouse"⁴⁹ in which many alternative religions cross-fertilized and incubated, modern Pagan and New Age activism grew from countercultural developments of the 1960s. Theorist Colin Campbell called this the "cultic milieu," or a general countercultural stew favoring deviant and suppressed understandings. Such a milieu certainly provided a good habitat for the explosion of nature religions.⁵⁰

When one looks at discourses among radical environmentalists and outdoor enthusiasts, one finds many echoes and expressions of nature religion, including those drawing on Paganism, New Age ideas, and Asian religions.

Speaking generally, radical environmentalism is an activist movement that, in addition to traditional political strategies such as lobbying and promoting candidates in elections, promotes and deploys illegal actions, both civil disobedience and sabotage, to pursue their ecological and political goals. The spiritual connections to nature most radical environmentalists feel have significant continuities with all of those we have mentioned who can be labeled biocentric nature religionists. The key difference is that their political and ecological analyses have led them to conclude, since their emergence in 1980 as a social force, that politics as usual is an insufficient response to the environmental intensifying of suffering that is accompanying an also intensifying environmental degradation.⁵¹ For these activists, direct resistance is morally obligatory, and, with such a form of nature religion, they engender conflict with those who do not share their earth-revering world view.

Conflict can also emerge when practitioners of nature religion do not agree among themselves as to what constitutes properly reverent behavior regarding places they consider sacred. For example, while protesting the construction of a telescope on Mount Graham in 1993, a site sacred to many Western Apache, several Euro-American activists argued with Native American compatriots over the presence of

alcohol on the sacred mountain. Some of the environmentalists refused to agree to rules the Native Americans wanted that would ban alcohol on the sacred mountain. During one debate a Wiccan woman entreated, "I come from a Catholic and a pagan perspective. In both, drinking is sacramental. But here, this is someone else's church. It's right for them, in their church, to ask us not to drink. Just as I would ask them not to use tobacco, their sacrament, in many of our pagan ceremonies."⁵² But others refused to agree to such rules. This incident shows that while people may agree on the sacredness of a place, it does not mean they will agree on what constitutes reverential behavior there.

Another example where biocentric nature religionists share fundamental beliefs but cannot agree on how to put them into practice has to do with whether, and if so how, to draw on Native American themes, beliefs, and practices for their spirituality. Ceremonies like the Council of All Beings and those held at the North American Bioregional Congresses sometimes employ Native American themes and prayers. Sometimes activists adopt Native practices such as the sweat lodge or the vision quest, or construct medicine wheels, to enhance their own nature spiritualities. Some criticize harshly such borrowing, arguing that it represents a continuing cultural genocide against Native Peoples, misrepresenting and idealizing old ways while ignoring the problems faced by Native Peoples today. According to Philip Deloria, for example, this type of "playing Indian" originated with the Boston Tea Party and continues through literary conceptions of the "noble savage" such as in James Fennimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, the development of Ernest Thompson Seton's Woodcraft Indians, and the Boy Scouts of America at the end of the nineteenth century, as well as more recently, in modern syncretistic Native traditions such as those practiced and promulgated by Sun Bear.⁵³ Others argue that non-Natives simply cannot practice Native American religions since, as non-Natives, the practice automatically becomes syncretic and different. Still others, however, hold that borrowing from different traditions is a common feature of religions around the world and should not be categorically condemned.⁵⁴ The key point to note here is that wherever people invest the land with sacred meanings there will be conflicts, and these often take a long time to work out amicably, if they ever are.

A different example of nature religion that also engenders conflicts over the land understood as sacred occurs when recreational rock climbers argue with American Indians, especially through lawsuits, over who should have privileged access to places both consider sacred. This occurred at Wyoming's Devil's Tower (Mato Tipi or Bear's Lodge in the nearby indigenous languages), a place of important ceremonial functions to several Plains tribes.⁵⁵ It might seem odd that rock climbers would justify their right to climb on sacred principles. But most examples of nature religion share a foundational assumption, that to know the spiritual value of nature, one must experience it directly. Some rock climbers, as well as subsets of the practitioners of many other outdoor pursuits, claim to experience nature as sacred and intrinsically valuable, and to have learned to set aside their ego and feeling of species superiority, through their outdoor practices, whether mountaineering, kayaking, surfing, fly fishing, canoeing, or something else.

Outdoor pursuits sometimes lead to or contribute not only to nature religion, but also to its radical environmental forms. For example, Naess, the founder of deep ecology, was an avid mountaineer who led the first ascent of Tirich Mir in the Hindu Kush. This activity shaped his perception of the interconnection and the intrinsic value of nature. Other deep ecology philosophers and participants in radical environmentalist moments, including Michael P. Cohen and George Sessions, were impacted similarly through their climbing experiences.⁵⁶ Reinhold Messner, one of the first to ascend Mount Everest without the aid of portable oxygen tanks, also reported emotional and spiritual feelings of connection with nature at the completion of his climb.⁵⁷ For mountaineers like Naess, Cohen, Sessions, and Messner, climbing can produce a spiritual feeling of unity with the universe. Muir himself had similar experiences after his near fatal ascent of California's Mount Ritter. And the religion scholar Greg Johnson has analyzed how rock climbers invent whole sacred languages and ritual practices in their sport.⁵⁸ So the practice of climbing a mountain can and has for some become a spiritual undertaking, one that both evokes a sense of the sacred in nature and also redounds in environmental concern and action.

Another outdoor sport, surfing, evokes a similar spirituality and ethics. Like mountaineering, surfing can generate feelings of oneness with the cosmos, the energies of the universe, and even special feelings of kinship with the many animals that surfers encounter. Some even report animistic experiences of interspecies communication with dolphins, pelicans, and other creatures, often as they sit outside on days when the surf is small or inconsistent and they have the opportunity to be alert to such awareness. Surfing also involves many ritual-like behaviors that, for some, help to evoke in them states of ego-transcending consciousness that leads them to care for and protect ocean habitats. Socially and environmentally concerned surfers have formed many organizations, some of which have chapters around the world that seek to raise ecological awareness, promote a sense of community among surfers, and, indeed, to awaken surfers to their own sense that the sport has a religious dimension that goes far beyond the fun "stoke" of the experience. Surfers who feel their practice has spiritual dimensions sometimes refer to themselves as "soul surfers," indicating that they see themselves involved in a religious quest and practice, not simply a sport.⁵⁹ Surfing, and perhaps mountaineering in some of its forms, might well be understood as new forms of biocentric nature religions, which really emerged and began to spread globally only in the twentieth century, and especially in the post World War II period.⁶⁰

While certainly not new, hunting and fishing are increasingly understood by their practitioners as a source of nature-based spirituality.⁶¹ Some who do understand these practices as religious draw on the work of scholars who have written about indigenous cultures and how such means of sustenance are often understood to be sacred practices.⁶² Some contemporary hunters report experiences of feeling a part of a great cycle of life and death and describe feelings of connection with the prey. Gary Lease explains the spirituality of hunting as follows:

an ethically determined hunt always bears the character of a "liturgy" or a "ritual." The marks of such a performance are to be found in the fact that the prey is always killed in a particular way and not according to whim; in the special constitution of a "sacrificial act," whereby the death has not occurred without purpose (in this way, for example, hunting is distinguished from the attempted extinction of a plague or nuisance animal); and in the perpetuation of honoring and remembering the prey and its death, which both imbue the being that has been killed with a further meaning that continues after its death.⁶³

For Lease and other spiritual hunters, hunting is a means of connecting to larger biological processes, and it transpires in a sacred time, one with ethical and ritual strictures.

In a similar way, fishing is spiritual practice for some, and for a subset of these, it even can be understood as the central ritual of a biocentric nature religion. As Samuel Snyder has argued, "just as any religious person approaches his/her respective tradition, the devout fly fisher approaches fly fishing with the same discipline and respect. It is not unusual to hear people speaking of fly fishing in ways that invoke the religious dimensions of life, as they commonly deploy terms like religious or spiritual, the sacred or divine, ritual, pilgrimage, meditation, priests, community, or notions like the sanctuary of religious space, to describe the experience."⁶⁴

A great deal of evidence exists that for some practitioners of mountaineering, surfing, kayaking, hunting, and fishing, the sport itself becomes a religious act.⁶⁵ They utilize religious terms such as "sacred," or may draw on concepts found in Asian religions, such as "karma," to describe the spiritual dimensions and lessons they derive from their practice. These practitioners often leave behind the theistic religious cultures into which they were born and develop more mystical understandings of unity with the natural world and its cycles, placing such perceptions at the center of what can probably best be called nature religion.

CONCLUSION

Environmentalism and a variety of outdoor activities, including many we have not discussed, such as gardening and ecological restoration practices, represent different but related forms of new or alternative religions.⁶⁶ They share a perception that the earth is sacred and all life is related, in some way, as kin. Like many new and alternative religions, environmental religion, including many of the mainstream and radical forms as well as diverse outdoor practices, emerge out of specific and complicated historical and cultural contexts. What we see over the past few decades are both new and stronger forms of not-so-new nature religions, which view the earth as sacred, and the protection of ecosystems as a moral duty.

And as has often been the case with nature religion and nature-related religion in American history and culture, scholars who analyze it are often also participants in it. As they both practice and reflect on the practice, they help their fellow practitioners, both scholars and outdoors enthusiasts, to understand these activities as nature religions. The resulting reciprocal feedback loop suggests that these activities

will increasingly be understood as nature religions, which will both compete in the religious marketplace for devotees and attract their fair share of attention in the future.

NOTES

1. Catherine Albanese, *Nature Religion in America: From the Algonkian Indians to the New Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 8.
2. See J. Samuel Preus, *Explaining Nature Religion* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996).
3. Further information on individuals, events, and ideas mentioned in this article is available in Bron Taylor, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (New York and London: Continuum International Publishers, 2005).
4. Albanese, *Nature Religion in America*, 12.
5. See Matthew Glass, "Manifest Destiny," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 1038–1044.
6. See the group's Web site, which was relocated to www.religionandecology.org in 2005. It provides a wide range of resources and announcements pertinent to the Religion and Ecology mission.
7. Mikhail Gorbachev, "Nature is my God," *Resurgence: An International Forum for Ecological and Spiritual Thinking* 184 (1997): 14–15 (15).
8. For the text as well as information about the initiative, see www.earthcharter.org.
9. Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 7.
10. Max Oelschlaeger, *Caring For Creation: An Ecumenical Approach to the Environmental Crisis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).
11. Max Oelschlaeger, "Paleolithic Religions and the Future," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 1256–1257 (1256).
12. See J. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), especially chap. 9.
13. See J. Baird Callicott, "Natural History as Natural Religion," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 1164–1169.
14. For two articles explicitly addressing the role of scholarly work in nature-related religiosity, see Bron Taylor, "Religious Studies and Environmental Concern," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 1373–1379; and Arne Kalland, "The Religious Environmentalist Paradigm," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 1367–1371.
15. Roderick Frazer Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4th ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001). See especially his epilogue to this edition.
16. See John Gatta, *Making Nature Sacred: Literature, Religion, and Environment in America from the Puritans to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
17. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 44.
18. Albanese, *Nature Religion in America*, 47.
19. Quoted in Gatta, *Making Nature Sacred*, 27.
20. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, or, Life in the Woods* (New York: Signet Classics, 1999), 72.
21. Gatta, *Making Nature Sacred*, 57.
22. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 141.

23. See John Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
24. Quoted in Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 124.
25. For an excellent biography of Muir, see Stephen Fox, *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981).
26. John Muir, *Nature Writings*, ed. William Cronon (New York: Library of America, 1997), 180.
27. Quoted in Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 126.
28. Quoted in Fox, *The American Conservation Movement*, 43.
29. Muir, *Nature Writings*, 825.
30. *Ibid.*, 606.
31. *Ibid.*, 566.
32. See Bron Taylor, "Death and Afterlife in Robinson Jeffers and Edward Abbey," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 455–456.
33. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 130.
34. Quoted in Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 189.
35. Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 6.
36. *Ibid.*, 224–225.
37. Curt Meine, *Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998). For a quicker introduction to the evidence see Meine's "Leopold, Aldo," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 105–108.
38. For compelling examples of her nature spirituality and evidence that she might also be considered an early ecofeminist, see Rachel Carson, *Lost Woods: The Discovered Writing of Rachel Carson*, ed. Linda Lear (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998).
39. For good introductions, see Bron Taylor and Michael Zimmerman, "Deep Ecology," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 456–460; George Sessions, ed., *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century* (Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, 1995); Bill Devall and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (Salt Lake City, UT: Peregrine Smith, 1985); Bill Devall, *Simple in Means, Rich in Ends: Practicing Deep Ecology* (Salt Lake City, UT: Peregrine Smith, 1988); Dolores LaChapelle, *Sacred Land, Sacred Sex: Rapture of the Deep* (Silverton, CO: Finn Hill Arts, 1988); Dolores LaChapelle, *Earth Wisdom* (Silverton, CO: Finn Hill Arts, 1978); Alan Drengson and Yuichi Inoue, eds., *The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic, 1995); Bron Taylor, "Ecological Resistance Movements; Not Always Deep but if Deep, Religious: Reply to Devall," *The Trumpeter* 13, no. 2 (1996): 98–103; and Frederick L. Bender, *The Culture of Extinction: Toward a Philosophy of Deep Ecology* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003).
40. For the theoretical basis and the initial guidebook for the ritual, see John Seed, Joanna Macy, Pat Fleming, and Arne Naess, *Thinking Like a Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings* (Philadelphia: New Society, 1988).
41. See Joanna Macy, "The Council of All Beings," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 425–429.
42. Michael Vincent McGinnis, "Bioregionalism," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 188–189 (189). See also Michael Vincent McGinnis, ed., *Bioregionalism* (London: Routledge, 1999).
43. See Bron Taylor, "Earth and Nature-Based Spirituality (Part I): From Deep Ecology to Radical Environmentalism," *Religion* 31, no. 2 (2001): 175–193; and Bron Taylor, "Earth and Nature-Based Spirituality (Part II): From Earth First! and Bioregionalism to Scientific

Paganism and the New Age," *Religion* 31, no. 3 (2001): 225–245. See also Bron Taylor, "Bio-regionalism and the North American Bioregional Congress," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 190–192.

44. On the process of bricolage in green religious subcultures, see Bron Taylor, "Diggers, Wolves, Ents, Elves and Expanding Universes: Bricolage and the Question of Violence within the Subcultures of Radical Environmentalism," in *The Cultic Milieu: Oppositional Subcultures in an Age of Globalization*, ed. Jeffrey Kaplan and Heléne Lööw (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 2002), 26–74. See also in the same volume Colin Campbell, "The Cult, the Cultic Milieu and Secularization," 12–25.

45. The difference in meaning between the terms Pagan and Neopagan is still contested by scholars today. For more information, the interested reader should see Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers and Other Pagans in America Today* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986); Graham Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism: Listening People, Speaking Earth* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Michael York, *Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).

46. Sarah Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 18.

47. Adrian J. Ivakhiv, *Claiming Sacred Ground: Pilgrims and Politics at Glastonbury and Sedona* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 8.

48. Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*, 22.

49. *Ibid.*, 42.

50. Colin Campbell, "The Cult, the Cultic Milieu and Secularization," 14.

51. For a primer on these issues see Bron Taylor, "Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 518–524; and for an international survey of such movements, see Bron Taylor, ed., *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

52. See Bron Taylor, "Resacralizing Earth: Pagan Environmentalism and the Restoration of Turtle Island," in *American Sacred Space*, ed. David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 97–151 (132).

53. See Phillip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); and Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2003), for more concerning issues of Native American religious appropriation.

54. See Bron Taylor, "Earth Spirituality or Cultural Genocide?: Radical Environmentalism's Appropriation of Native American Spirituality," *Religion* 27, no. 2 (1997): 183–215 (184).

55. See Bron Taylor and Joel Geffen, "Battling Religions in Parks and Forest Reserves: Facing Religion in Conflicts over Protected Areas," in *The Full Value of Parks and Protected Areas: From Economics to the Intangibles*, ed. David Harmon and Allen Putney (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2003), 281–293; and Matthew Glass, "Devil's Tower, *Mato Tipi*, or Bear's Lodge (Wyoming)," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 477–479.

56. In Cohen's book about John Muir he describes his own mystical, oceanic experience of oneness with the universe during his climb of Cathedral Peak in Yosemite National Park on the 100th anniversary of John Muir's ascent. See *The Pathless Way: John Muir and American Wilderness* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

57. See Kocku von Stuckrad, "Mountaineering," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 1119–1120.
58. Greg Johnson, "Rock Climbing," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 1398–1400.
59. See Glen Hening and Bron Taylor, "Surfing," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 1607–1612. For a good example of writing from a soul surfer, see Drew Kampion, *Stoked: A History of Surf Culture*, rev. ed. (Utah: Gibbs Smith, 2005). Kampion also wrote *The Way of the Surfer* (NY: Harry Abrams, 2003).
60. Bron Taylor, "Surfing into Spirituality" (paper presented at the American Academy of Religion, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2005). A forthcoming book on biocentric nature religion by Taylor will include analysis of the religious history of surfing.
61. See Ted Keresote, *Bloodties: Nature, Culture, and the Hunt* (New York: Kodansha International, 1993); James A. Swan, *In Defense of Hunting* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995); Mary Zeiss Stange, *Woman the Hunter* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997); and David Petersen, *Heartsblood: Hunting, Spirituality, and Wildness in America* (Boulder, CO: Johnson Books, 2000).
62. Perhaps most importantly on Paul Shepard's books, beginning especially with his seminal *The Tender Carnivore and the Sacred Game* (New York: Scribners, 1973).
63. Gary Lease, "Hunting and the Origins of Religion," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 805–809 (807). See also Mary Zeiss Stange, "Hunting Spirituality," in *ibid.*, 809–811; and David Petersen, "Hunting Spirituality and Animism," in *ibid.*, 811–812.
64. Samuel Snyder, "Fly Fishing," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 667–669 (667).
65. Whitney Sanford, "Pinned on Karma Rock: Popular Understanding of Whitewater Kayaking as Religious Experience through Hindu and Buddhist Terms" (paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2005); Samuel Snyder, "Casting for Connection: Religion, Ethics, and Environmental Conservation in Fly Fishing Culture" (paper presented at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2005). These scholars continue their research.
66. See for example William Jordan III, "Restoration Ecology and Ritual," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Taylor, 1379–1381; and Maria G. Cattell, "Gardening and Nature Spirituality," *ibid.*, 687.

FURTHER READING

- Albanese, Catherine. *Nature Religion in America: From the Algonkian Indians to the New Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Callicott, J. Baird. *Earth's Insights: A Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Fox, Stephen. *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981.
- Ivakhiv, Adrian J. *Claiming Sacred Ground: Pilgrims and Politics at Glastonbury and Sedona*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
- Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949.
- Muir, John. *Nature Writings*. Edited by William Cronon. New York: Library of America, 1997.
- Nash, Roderick Frazer. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. 4th ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001.

Oelschlaeger, Max. *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991.

Seed, John, Joanna Macy, Pat Fleming, and Arne Naess. *Thinking Like a Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings*. Philadelphia: New Society, 1988.

Taylor, Bron, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. New York and London: Continuum International Publishers, 2005.