

CHOICE_{connect}

A publication of the Association of College and Research Libraries

A division of the American Library Association

Editorial Offices: 575 Main Street, Suite 300, Middletown, CT 06457-3445

Phone: (860) 347-6933

Fax: (860) 704-0465

October 2020 Vol. 58 No. 2

University of Washington Press

Social & Behavioral Sciences

History, Geography & Area Studies - North America

58-0565 F882 CIP

Waterston, Ellen. **Walking the high desert: encounters with rural America along the Oregon Desert Trail.**

Washington, 2020. 246p bibl ISBN 9780295747507 pbk, \$24.95; ISBN 9780295747514 ebook, contact publisher for price.

This lyrical and passionate celebration of the Oregon high desert is devoted to delivering a compelling argument for its conservation. Waterston masterfully weaves together diverse voices (ranchers, environmentalists, artists, government employees, Native Americans) in a series of lessons on the history, geology, biology, geography, politics, and ethics of this desert landscape in the context of hiking the Oregon Desert Trail. Not a travelogue but a deep examination of regional issues with parallels at the national level—and unlike many environmental books that focus on environmental issues at the expense of understanding human communities—this text examines the pertinent conflicts within the context of rural communities impacted by local environmental issues. The author's thesis is clear: regardless of the details, all parties to a conflict (e.g., ranchers versus environmentalists) must work together for the best solutions. With deep roots in this region and personal history as a rancher, the author is well positioned to poke at the irony of conflicting claims made by parties with clearly different interests, and her engaging text is at once witty and informative. *Walking the High Desert* unpacks the complexity of conservation issues as lived experience, and will make a tremendous contribution as a defining text for Western conservation advocates and the policy questions they face.

--C. L. Johnson, *emerita*, *Gustavus Adolphus College*

Summing Up: Highly recommended. All readers.