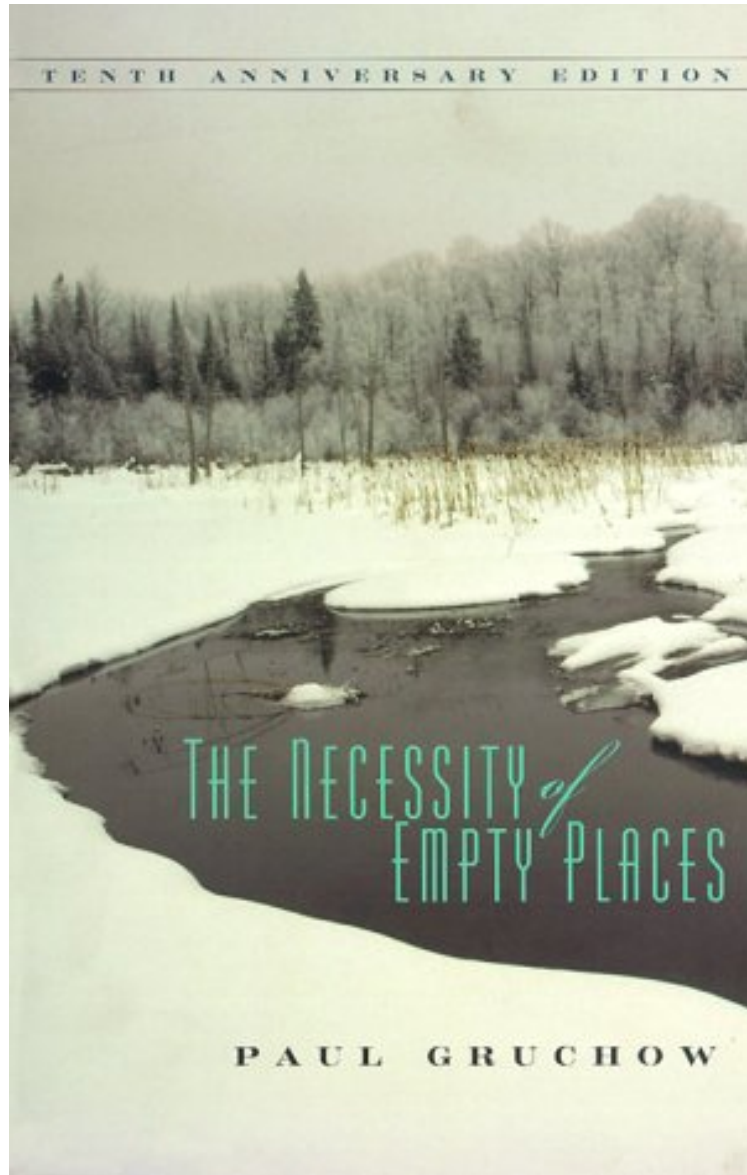


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The Necessity of Empty Places

Paul Gruchow

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excellent condition; in fact, it was like new. I wouldn't hesitate to order from this seller again. 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Why People Should Be OutdoorsBy doomsdayer520This book is an enjoyable mix of travelogue and environmental philosophy, but the travelogue portion is more limited than it seems at first glance. A few chapters describe Gruchow's visits to interestingly empty places in Minnesota and Nebraska, but most of the rest of the book deals with two backpacking trips in the mountains of Wyoming. In each chapter Gruchow's writing evolves quickly from a scenery-based travelogue to soul searching and very in-depth musings on mankind's place in nature. The book essentially becomes a series of essays on why people have become disconnected from nature in the modern world, and should spend far more time in the empty spaces that Gruchow enjoys visiting. His thoughts on these matters are deeply philosophical with a real talent for big-picture analysis on the state of human society. Some great examples are Gruchow's use of the population distribution of robins to describe how corporate America is homogenizing our natural diversity (chapter 9), and a staring contest with a trout in a mountain lake that kicks off a wave of social and personal philosophy (chapter 18). Gruchow's writing has the tendency to get drifty and to go off on very long and mundane tangents - beware of sections that are written in the second person especially. But this style of writing (and thinking) is what happens when you're alone in nature with nothing but your thoughts. Gruchow proves that more people should experience this state of mind.

An evocative personal narrative that takes us to some of America's least traveled corners in Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana.

From Publishers WeeklyGruchow (*Journal of a Prairie Year*) here captures the unconventional beauty of the West with landscapes of the U.S. and presents a compelling case for their preservation. Indicting our cultural penchant for reshaping nature ("Our backyards have become as regular and predictable as our McDonalds"), the author contends that we are putting ourselves on the endangered species list: "We may have lost our awe of nature, but its power remains, and to the extent that we are unmindful of that power, we are less, not more, secure." The book is primarily a celebration of those rugged places that still permit us to see that power. The occasional digressionsan anecdote about John Berryman or a hymn remembered from boyhoodserve to refresh rather than obstruct, and are neatly tied in with the main narrative. Whether tracing the remnants of the Oregon Trail or traversing the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming, Gruchow describes, instructs and reflects with the self-assurance of one in complete command of his subject. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalThis series of interconnected essays reflects one man's exploration of natural places, from the plains of his native Minnesota to the mountains of Wyoming. Gruchow mixes his observations of the natural world with philosophical meanderings, often condemning our present age for its excesses and creeping homogeneity. Among the chapters are descriptions of a modern tour along the old Oregon Trail, walking expeditions into the Bighorn Mountains, and the migration of sandhill cranes. Some of Gruchow's observations are mundane; many are arresting. For all libraries with active natural history collections. Randy Dykhuis, Grand Rapids P.L., Mich.Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.