

Aug. 22, 2023

'Streams of Consequence' is a compendium of stories about the wildlife and wild places of Alberta, told through the lens of an experienced biologist who grew up on this land. This is not a typical science book, but an insightful and thought-provoking compilation of essays interspersed with humour and relatable examples. If you have never met Lorne Fitch, you would likely come to like him after reading this book. He doesn't directly criticize or blame but highlights a hopeful path for consciously doing the right thing to protect nature.

Lorne's ability to weave topics into interesting tales is well-known to many in Alberta. He is a ubiquitous friend of the environment, and his cheeky jam-filled expressions sum up the generational amnesia present in the economic biases of industry and the Alberta government. He laments that "We continue to be deluded into thinking that all our problems will have solutions – that our pace of development can continue and we can salvage some vestiges of biodiversity." He provides a moral compass through delightful tales of the land.

Fitch speaks of species, great and small, and the landscapes that support them, and their inherent right to exist. For many readers this may be an introduction to the likes of hare-footed locoweed and short-horned lizards, but his weavings bring the reader to a connection with, and a wonder to explore and protect this fragile world. His references to chocolate, Star Trek, Picasso, dragons, Dr. Seuss, and other memorable quotes make the book even more enjoyable. He does this just as he also points out how many of Alberta native species are making 'their last stand'.

Every Albertan should read this book. You won't be lost in technical speak or feel like you were hit over the head, but quietly absorb the message: "To lose the abundance of biodiversity in Alberta, within a century of European settlement, to the demands of the corporate world (and to disconnected shareholders) is comparable to shredding all the books from every library to relieve a temporary paper shortage."

This book made me laugh, and think, and even cry a tear or two. It is what I want in a book, to learn, and understand, and feel.

*Deborah Donnelly, BSc, MA*

*Executive Director, Alberta Wilderness Association*