Ten years ago, The Great New Wilderness Debate began a cross-disciplinary conversation about the varied constructions of “wilderness” and the controversies that surrounded them. The Wilderness Debate Rages On will reinvigorate that conversation and usher in a second decade of debate.

Like its predecessor, the book gathers both critiques and defenses of the idea of wilderness from a wide variety of perspectives and voices. The Wilderness Debate Rages On includes the best work done on the concept of wilderness over the past decade, underappreciated essays from the early twentieth century that offer an alternative vision of the concept and importance of wilderness, and writings meant to clarify or rethink the concept of wilderness. Narrative writers such as Wendell Berry, Scott Russell Sanders, Marilynne Robinson, Kathleen Dean Moore, and Lynn Laitala are also given a voice in order to show how the wilderness debate is expanding outside the academy.

The writers represented in the anthology include ecologists, environmental philosophers, conservation biologists, cultural geographers, and environmental activists. The book begins with little-known papers by early twentieth-century ecologists advocating the preservation of natural areas for scientific study, not, as did Thoreau, Muir, and the early Leopold, for purposes of outdoor recreation. The editors argue that had these writers influenced the eventual development of federal wilderness policy, our national wilderness system would better serve contemporary conservation priorities for representative ecosystems and biodiversity.

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“The Wilderness Debate clearly rages on, and this is a fine and engaging representation of it as well as a constructive contribution to it on many levels. Strong and wide-ranging essays detail and deepen a real rollicking philosophical debate with serious stakes and thus will make this collection stand out and stand alone.”

—Anthony Weston, author of A 21st Century Ethical Toolbox