

Recommended Reading for Earth Day

Thrillcraft: The Environmental Consequences of Motorized Recreation

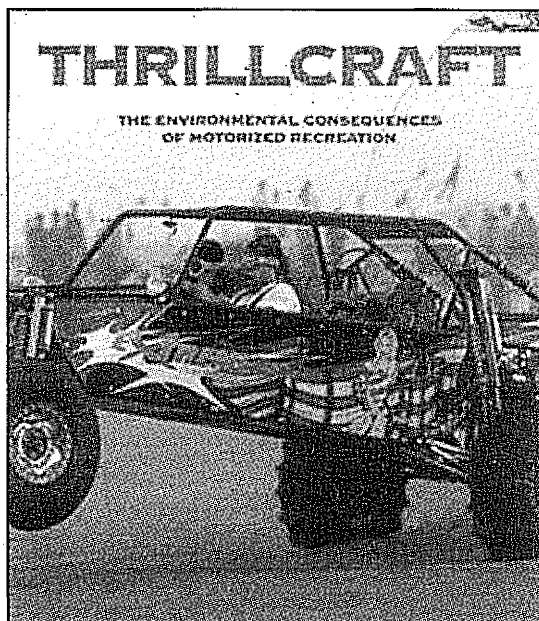
Renowned activist and author George Wuerthner's newest book, *Thrillcraft*, is a stunning indictment of the destruction of landscapes across the United States by motorized recreational vehicles. The photographs and essays in this beautifully produced, large-format volume expose a startling array of devastating effects to public lands and waters from four-wheelers, dirt bikes, jet skis, and other motorized recreational craft that are penetrating the last bastions of wild America.

Thrillcraft, a project of the Foundation for Deep Ecology, asks the reader to look at how American society has come to a place of – in the words of James Howard Kunstler – “mechanized lumpenleisure” and to think about how to stop the rampant degradation as leisure machines run amok on America's public lands. Essays by more than 25 policy experts, activists, and others, running the gamut from writers like Rick Bass to scientists like Barrie Gilbert, report on the harm done by thrillcraft, examine the origins of the craze, and propose solutions that value conservation over access and abuse.

Growing thrillcraft use is increasingly responsible for habitat fragmentation, harm to sensitive wildlife, soil erosion, the spread of invasive weeds, and the loss of wilderness tranquility, as well as water and air pollution. *Thrillcraft* brings together many of the environmental movement's finest thinkers and advocates to explore how past and current land management has allowed for the widespread abuse of public lands. From the Algodones Dunes in Southern California to the White River National Forest in Vermont, Wuerthner's tour de force examines the wide range of lands under assault by motorized pleasurecraft and the swiftly growing crowds of users that are addicted to them.

The first book to fully expose the extent of the threat to our natural heritage from motorized recreation, *Thrillcraft* offers a vision for a future when the howl of the wind or a wolf might be heard again over the roar of machines.

—Chris Kassar, *Center for Biological Diversity*



New Novel Takes on Endangered Species and Extinction

How the Dead Dream, a new novel by Center for Biological Diversity staffer Lydia Millet, tells the story of an ambitious young real estate developer in L.A. who, after a personal crisis, becomes obsessed with rare and vanishing animals and starts breaking into zoos at night to be close to them. Millet, an award-winning novelist who also happens to be married to Center for Biological Diversity founder Kieran

Suckling, has written one of the very first American novels to approach the emotional and aesthetic implications of the extinction tragedy. *How the Dead Dream* is notable for its thoughtful engagement with the social and personal effects of massive species loss:

He soon learned to recognize the signs of an animal's imminent disappearance. Some were tagged or collared or photographed, some monitored by bureaucrats. Sometimes a group or individual took up the cause of an animal or a plant and could muster the rationale for a lawsuit, and often the courts favored the victim; but the victim remained a victim and for each victim whose passing was noted thousands more slid away in the dark.

As the story's protagonist struggles by night with ideas of human aloneness and what it might mean to be a “last” animal, he's building sprawling subdivisions by day, grappling with his suicidal mother, whose husband has left her to find himself working in a gay bar in Key West, and fending off attacks by his brutal and jealous business partner Fulton.

How the Dead Dream is Millet's sixth novel, and not the first to explore environmental issues; her fifth, *Oh Pure and Radiant Heart*, dealt with the moral, cultural and philosophical legacy of nuclear weapons. Available from publisher Counterpoint in January 2008, *How the Dead Dream* has already been voted one of the top books of the year by both the National Book Critics' Circle and the American Library Association's Booklist.

Reading Group Guides to help spur discussion in book clubs and classes are available for both conservation-focused (www.softskull.com/files/HtDDguideB.pdf) and general (www.softskull.com/files/HtDDguideA.pdf) audiences.

—Kieran Suckling, *Center for Biological Diversity*