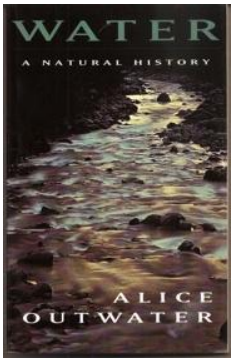
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Water: A Natural History

Outwater, Alice



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Outwater, Alice. *Water: A Natural History*. New York: Basic Books, 1996.

An environmental engineer turned ecology writer relates the history of waterways in the United States and her own growing understanding of why these waterways continue to be polluted—and what needs to be done to save this essential natural resource. Water: A Natural History takes us back to the diaries of the first Western explorers; it moves from the reservoir to the modern toilet, from the grasslands of the Midwest to the Everglades of Florida, through the guts of a wastewater treatment plant and out to the waterways again. It shows how human-engineered dams, canals and farms replace nature's beaver dams, prairie dog tunnels, and buffalo wallows. Step by step, Outwater makes clear what should have always been obvious: while engineering can depollute water, only ecologically interacting systems can create healthy waterways. The heart of this history is a vision of our land and waterways as they once were, and a plan that can restore them to their former glory: a land of living streams, public lands with hundreds of millions of beaver-built wetlands, prairie dog towns that increase the amount of rainfall that percolates to the groundwater, and forests that feed their fallen trees to the sea. — Basic Books website

Related links:

- H-Environment, H-Net Reviews, reviewed by Christian McMillen
  http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php
- Basic Books website featuring this book
  http://search.perseusbooksgroup.com/book/paperback/water/9780465037803

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