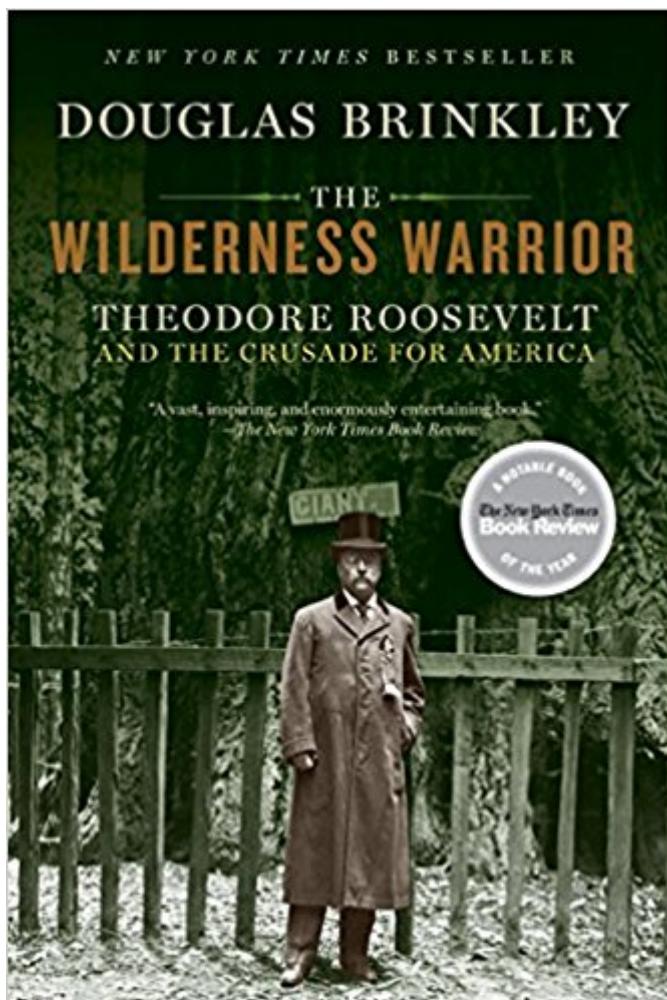


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# The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt And The Crusade For America



## Synopsis

From New York Times bestselling historian Douglas Brinkley comes a sweeping historical narrative and eye-opening look at the pioneering environmental policies of President Theodore Roosevelt, avid bird-watcher, naturalist, and the founding father of America's conservation movement. In this groundbreaking epic biography, Douglas Brinkley draws on never-before-published materials to examine the life and achievements of our naturalist president. • By setting aside more than 230 million acres of wild America for posterity between 1901 and 1909, Theodore Roosevelt made conservation a universal endeavor. This crusade for the American wilderness was perhaps the greatest U.S. presidential initiative between the Civil War and World War I. Roosevelt's most important legacies led to the creation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and passage of the Antiquities Act in 1906. His executive orders saved such treasures as Devils Tower, the Grand Canyon, and the Petrified Forest.

## Book Information

Paperback: 960 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial; Reprint edition (May 4, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060565314

ISBN-13: 978-0060565312

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 166 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #148,593 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #120 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Environmentalists & Naturalists #372 in Books > Science & Math > Environment > Environmentalism #469 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > United States > US Presidents

## Customer Reviews

Best of the Month, August 2009: "The movement for the conservation of wild life and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose, and method." So wrote Theodore Roosevelt, known as the "naturalist President" for his efforts in protecting wildlife and wilderness, merging preservation and patriotism into a quintessential American ideal. The *Wilderness Warrior*, Douglas Brinkley's massive(ly readable) new biography, intrepidly explores the wilderness of influences (Audubon and Darwin), personal

relationships (Muir and Pinchot), and frontier adventures (too many to mention) that shaped Roosevelt's proto-green views. Topping 800 pages (ironically, one wonders how many trees fell for the first printing), *The Wilderness Warrior* makes an excellent companion to Timothy Egan's *The Big Burn* and Ken Burns's *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*. --Jon Foro --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Theodore Roosevelt spent the day of July 1, 1908, the tenth anniversary of the Battle of San Juan Hill, creating forty-five national forests. In this biographical study of T.R.'s campaign to save hundreds of millions of acres of wilderness, Brinkley writes that "the forestry movement would be forced down his opponents' throats." Roosevelt's intense love for nature was, Brinkley makes clear, a conqueror's love "triumphant Darwinism" and included a "blood lust" in hunting the wildlife he championed. The baby bear that, in popular myth, T.R. refused to shoot was actually an adult bear that he directed to be dispatched with a knife. Brinkley fully inhabits Roosevelt's mind, a condition that has its disadvantages "the book, with blow-by-blow accounts of college hiking trips and squabbles between naturalists, does not entirely earn its nine hundred pages, making it harder to see the forests (and the story of how T.R. rescued them) for the trees. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Although this book is nominally about Theodore Roosevelt, it really is a history of the progressive conservation movement during Roosevelt's presidency. Short biographies of several of the key players are included, including Muir, Pinchot, Lahey, and others. The author has done a tremendous amount of research of that era and includes lots of details. The author's prose sometimes seems to get a little too dramatic and grandiose, but the story he is telling of one of the best stories in American history. If you are interesting in how the Forest service came to be, why we now have a Grand Canyon National Park, and several others as well, then read this book.. I highly recommend it.

*The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America, 1858-1919* is a biography of Theodore Roosevelt that concentrates strictly on his conservationist side. Other domestic policy and foreign policy occasionally come into play, but only when it's connected to conservation policy. It is a long book, repetitive on occasion, but very readable and engaging. "We regard Attic temples and Roman triumphal arches and Gothic cathedrals as of priceless value," Roosevelt decreed, full of wilderness warrior fury. "But we are, as

a whole, still in that low state of civilization where we do not understand that it is also vandalism wantonly to destroy or to permit the destruction of what is beautiful in nature, whether it be a cliff, a forest, or a species of mammal or bird. Here in the United States we turn our rivers and streams into sewers and dumping-grounds, we pollute the air, we destroy forests, and exterminate fishes, birds, and mammals—“not to speak of vulgarizing charming landscapes with hideous advertisements.” From childhood to adult, Brinkley covers what made Roosevelt a conservationist and sets the stage for what he was to do as a public servant and politician; you really get an idea of what made Roosevelt the unique personality he was. He then explains in detail not only what Roosevelt did but how and why; you couldn’t get a much better explanation of his conservation policy. Brinkley ties in the personalities from all walks of life who helped shape and execute his policies as well. Unfortunately, the book seems to end abruptly; Brinkley writes about Roosevelt’s plans post-Presidency but doesn’t go into them in the same detail that he did everything else. Don’t think, however, that this book is a hagiography. Brinkley takes care to point out the contrast between Roosevelt’s conservationism and some, but not all, of his hunting and between his conservationist policy and reclamation policy. Granted, this would have made an already long book even longer, perhaps a second volume would have been in order. The book is well researched and documented, with good maps, annexes, and end notes; the maps, however, would have served better in-line with the relevant text. They very well may have been in the print edition, but I was reading the Kindle version and the maps came after the final chapter. “As forces of globalization run amok, Roosevelt’s stout resoluteness to protect our environment is a strong reminder of our national wilderness heritage, as well as an increasingly urgent call to arms.” Published in 2009, *The Wilderness Warrior* is somewhat prescient given the environmental policies of the current administration. Many times as I was reading I found myself asking what Roosevelt would think of President Trump. In the area of environmental policy, there’s no doubt that Roosevelt would find our current policies and administration wanting. I thoroughly enjoyed reading *The Wilderness Warrior* and learned quite a bit from it. If you’re interested in nature and wildlife conservation and the origins of the forest service, our national parks and monuments, and our wildlife refuges, this book is a great place to start. If you’re at all interested in what made our 26th President tick, this is a good book to read.

The author has written a fascinating book about our 26th President allowing the reader to travel along with T.R. as he went about the business of saving America’s forest lands, monuments, birds and numerous animals. We citizens owe him deep gratitude for his efforts to heighten our concepts

of conservancy and perpetuation of the animal and bird world. T.R. was quite eccentric in some ways. He created bird sanctuaries, national parks and grazing lands for bison, deer and big horn sheep and yet, he was the consummate hunter of big game. I find it almost impossible to correlate these two passions in this one man, but they were a huge part of his vision for this country. The writing is excellent and you will learn historical fact while enjoying the read. I highly recommend this book to anyone who will enjoy getting to know T.R. and the history surrounding his time on this earth. Sadly his demise came much too soon.

Douglas Brinkley writes an incredibly detailed book on the life of TR as an environmentalist and supporter and political inspiration and creator of our national parks. Most people recognize TR as an outdoorsman and a preservationist but in this book Brinkley goes into incredible detail to write about TR's fascination with birds, all types of creatures and taxidermy from a very young age continuing throughout his life. His collection as a youth is like a small museum and as an adult accelerates with his desire for fitness and the great outdoors whether climbing the mountains in Maine, Europe or out west near his beloved Badlands of North Dakota. Not even his stint as Colonel of the Rough Riders in Cuba during war curbs his observations and writing of the local fauna and animals. Roosevelt also rubs shoulders with the greatest naturalists of his time that includes George Bird Grinnell, John Burroughs and the great forest preservationist Gifford Pinchot. From his passion for ornithology, TR recognizes the need for preservation of rare species of birds on a national level graduating to all forms of endangered species. He becomes much more than an amateur biologist to write several books and articles on nature and the history of the west among his many subjects such as his book on the naval war of 1812. TR's development as a politician, head of the NYC police, Asst. Secretary of the Navy, governor, and vice-President are covered virtually as sidelines to his naturalist development. The story of the book is TR's desire to experience and preserve America's natural resources for the good of ecology such as watersheds, limiting pollution and to limit the destruction of forests to avoid what was considering the denuding of Europe of woodlands. TR's passion never stops and although a hunter, he recognizes nature's natural battle of survival and limits his hunting to species that are not endangered. This book is fascinating particularly if you are very interested in TR's role as a preservationist and naturalist in detail. However, at over 800 written pages, the one fault that I would agree with the NY Times book review about is the need for some editing to reduce the size and detail. Thus, unless you enjoy the topic to relative exhaustion, you may find the book a bit slow going. My favorite parts of the book are about TR in the great outdoors particularly his time in his ranches in the Badlands. To think that he went hunting alone in a blizzard, having to hole up

alone in a discovered lean to then hunt & cook his food and tamp back the next day is quite entertaining and amazing. I give the book 5 stars because Brinkley has a passion for the naturalist aspect of TR and after reading this book, you will know everything you need to know on this subject

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