

Writer and activist Bill McKibben presents an unprecedented anthology of American environmental writing for Earth Day 2008

Anthology is the first to define an “environmental canon”

Companion website (www.americanearth.org) launches March 24.

As America and the world grapple with the consequences of global environmental change, The Library of America is pleased to announce the publication of *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau*, an unprecedented and provocative anthology of the very best of 175 years of American writing about the natural world, our place in it, and our responsibilities for it.

This inspiring volume, edited by renowned environmental writer, scholar and activist Bill McKibben, will be published for Earth Day, April 22, and features 1,000 pages of great writing, 80 pages of illustrations and photography, and a foreword by former Vice President and Nobel Prize winner Al Gore.

A companion website, AmericanEarth.org, will debut on March 24, featuring interviews with some of *American Earth*'s contributors, book excerpts, videos, an interactive timeline of American environmental history, and a contest inviting readers to submit essays and images of their thoughts, activities, and events inspired by the book. For a preview of the book and website, please visit www.americanearth.org.

“From the beginning,” writes McKibben in his introduction, “American writing has concerned itself with the story of people and the natural world.” Beginning with Henry David Thoreau’s 1837 *Journals*, *American Earth* takes readers on a journey through American history up to 2007 (with Rebecca Solnit’s article, “The Thoreau Problem.”) Along the way, the seminal writings of such visionary figures as John Muir, Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson are joined by more contemporary pieces by Michael Pollan, Paul Hawken, and Barbara Kingsolver. Encompassing essays, political and protest speeches, legal arguments, song lyrics, poetry and fiction, *American Earth* reflects a remarkable range of literary, cultural, historical, and philosophical perspectives on the American landscape and people. McKibben’s commentary on the selections provides rich historical context to the environmental challenges making headlines today, such as global warming, wilderness and marine protection, sprawl, toxic pollution, and the urban environment.

More examples of the remarkable diversity of writing and thinking included here are:

- John Steinbeck, from his 1939 novel *The Grapes of Wrath*
- Theodore Roosevelt’s stirring 1903 speech at the Grand Canyon
- Phillip K. Dick (from *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*)

- Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas’s 1965 landmark legal dissent in *Sierra Club v. Morton*
- Marvin Gaye, “Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)”
- Cesar Chavez (Grapes of Wrath Boycott Speech)
- Edward Abbey (“Polemic: Industrial Tourism and the National Parks”)
- Robert D. Bullard (from *Dumping in Dixie*)
- Barry Lopez (“A Presentation of Whales”)

and much, much more.

As Al Gore writes in his foreword to *American Earth*, “Taken together, these essays, poems, cartoons, and speeches show how our country’s attitude toward nature has developed and changed from Thoreau’s time to our own.”

Early acclaim for *American Earth* has been enthusiastic:

“Superb. . . . *American Earth* can be read as a survey of the literature of American environmentalism, but above all, it should be enjoyed for the sheer beauty of the writing.” –*Publisher’s Weekly* (starred review)

“Unique, much-needed. . . . If you choose but one environmental book this season, make it *American Earth*.” –*Booklist* (starred review)

Beginning its second quarter century in 2008, The Library of America (www.loa.org) is an award-winning nonprofit publisher dedicated to preserving America’s best and most significant writing in handsome, enduring volumes, featuring authoritative texts. Hailed as “the most important book-publishing project in the nation’s history” (*Newsweek*), this acclaimed series now features over 180 volumes.

For more information, or to obtain press materials for *American Earth*, contact publicity@americanearth.org