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## STATE OF THE FIELD ESSAY

### Environmental History

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The historical subfield focusing on the environment is one of the youngest and most dynamic areas of groundbreaking new scholarship. Also, this subfield can be complicated given its growth overlapping with different historical subfields such as labor, and interacting with other humanities disciplines such as literature. This state of the field essay, undertaken for a United States History Master's level class, will focus on the latest developments in United States-related environmental history. The scholarship will show that this evolution is influenced by shifts in both society and scholarly priorities, along with the desires of the leaders in the field.<sup>1</sup> Given such changes, this essay will begin by discussing the foundational issues, including those raised in 2010 by J. R. McNeill, among others, in his then state of the field essay discussing environmental history.<sup>2</sup> This essay will then discuss the advancement in scholarship since McNeill's essay, including assessing the degree to which historians have responded to the gaps in historiography identified by McNeill, and the trends that are driving the current academic study. These trends relating to the United States environmental history include, as discussed below, multi-disciplinary scholarship focused on issues as diverse as labor, climate changes, food, mining, and migration.

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<sup>1</sup> Graeme Wynn. "Forest History and Environmental History: Kissing Cousins?," *Environmental History*, Volume 28, No. 4 (2023), 694. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/726449?journalCode=eh>

<sup>2</sup> J. R. McNeill, "The State of the Field of Environmental History," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 35 (2010): 345-74. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-environ-040609-105431>.

To determine the state of the field for environmental history scholarship, I reviewed several sources specific to the field, including among others: those books assigned for class; *Environmental History Journal*, Volume 28, Number 4, October 2023; the recent winners and finalists for the George Perkins Marsh Prize for the best book awarded annually by the American Society for Environmental History; January 2022 through October 2023 of the database maintained by the Forest History Society for the *Environmental History Journal*; and other recent books and journal articles focused on environmental history.

### **BACKGROUND OF ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY**

Environmental history initially developed in the United States during the 1970s, followed shortly in other regions of the world. Graeme Wynn states that many practitioners believe it to be an offshoot of the environmental movement in the 1960s, but that it really goes back much further.<sup>3</sup> Wynn believes that the idea of human-environmental interactions are sufficiently important to have originated in ancient times, even without it having been a separate subfield of history until the recent advancement. Wynn states about environmental history, “It is now a big-tent enterprise, drawing a shared sense of endeavor – if not always obvious coherence – from its general focus on the reciprocal relations between humans and the rest of nature.”<sup>4</sup> J. R. McNeill, in his 2010 essay, defines environmental history as “the history of the relationship between human societies and the rest of nature on which they depend,”<sup>5</sup> and offers three areas of inquiry: material, political, and cultural. “Material” environmental history studies the impact between humans and nature, “political” environmental history studies the effort of humans to regulate the environment, and “cultural” environmental history studies what humans thought, or have written,

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<sup>3</sup> Wynn, “Forest History,” 695.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> McNeill, “State of the Field,” 347, 349.

about the relationship between society and nature.<sup>6</sup> The advancement in how humans think about the environment since the 1960s, including climate change concerns, may well be the driving factor in the increased visibility provided to the environment by history scholars. McNeill uses his essay to not only discuss the existing scholarship but also to point out the gaps in that scholarship. As an example, McNeill states “The study of slavery, in Africa and in the Americas is one of the jewels in the crown of historiography in the last generation, for which environmental historians can take no credit...[a] shining opportunity still beckons.”<sup>7</sup>

McNeill then identifies six issues that he advises for future scholarship. Several of the issues are international in nature and focus on the Middle East, Russia, East Asia, and Korea. As to the United States, McNeill recommends the following: (1) work on environmental history arising from the seas and oceans; (2) the environmental history of slave plantations; and (3) the environmental history of migration.<sup>8</sup> As seen in the discussion below, each of these three areas now have scholarly books that, if not directly on point, include substantive analysis of those issues.

Prior to delving into the substantive areas which form the current state of the field scholarship on environmental history, some historical background on environmentalists and the evolution of environmentalism is useful. In summary, historian scholarship directed at the environment has grown exponentially in response to societal advancements in environmental activism. Further, as attitudes among environmentalist have fundamentally changed over time, so have their legal rights. For example, in his 2022 book focusing on the Sierra Club, the Forest Service, and the Disney Company (then known to be an environmentally friendly company)

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 346-7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 358-359.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 366.

titled *Dawn at Mineral King Valley: The Sierra Club, the Disney Company, and the Rise of Environmental Law*, Daniel Selmi explores a fascinating battle over wilderness development and the rights to enforce environmental laws.<sup>9</sup> The Mineral King Valley in the Sierra Nevada Mountains an area of pristine wilderness that would have made an excellent ski resort in a development supported by the United States Forest Service as early as the 1940s.<sup>10</sup> In September 1949, the Sierra Club examined the proposed ski resort and resolved that it “found no objection.”<sup>11</sup> That all changed with the environmental movement by 1965 as their priorities advanced toward more protection of nature.<sup>12</sup> In 1969, when the Sierra Club filed the lawsuit to stop the development, environmental issues were exploding. As an example, *Time Magazine* named the environment as “the issue of the year.”<sup>13</sup> Although the Sierra Club eventually lost the case to the Forest Service at the United States Supreme Court in 1972, as it did not show a compensable injury, the Sierra Club prevailed on the broader issue of whether environmental groups have standing to compel the enforcement of environmental laws. This ruling is foundational today in environmentally-related legal actions.<sup>14</sup>

As Selmi was writing about the shift of mainstream environmentalism towards the protection of nature, Keith Woodhouse was focusing on the development of radical environmentalism in his 2018 book, the 2019 winner of the Society for US Intellectual History for the best book of intellectual history, titled *The Ecocentrists: A History of Radical*

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel P. Selmi, *Dawn at Mineral King Valley: The Sierra Club, the Disney Company, and the Rise of Environmental Law* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2022).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-39, 73, and 252.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 47 and 252-255.

*Environmentalism*.<sup>15</sup> Woodhouse is one example of historians paying attention to the wider political issues raised by the environmental movement as evolving since the last half of the twentieth century. As stated by Woodhouse, “In the era of climate change and accelerating human impacts on the planet, it is worth revisiting the cultural turn and its place in environmental history.”<sup>16</sup> Within this framework, Woodhouse explores the relationship between environmentalism and democratic procedures, social justice, and freedoms held by individuals.<sup>17</sup> He defines “ecocentrism,” a term used in the title of the book, as a philosophy claiming an equality between people and nonhuman nature. He explains why those people whom he calls radical environmentalists believe that modern human society is destroying nature and veering the planet towards a catastrophe.<sup>18</sup> As stated by Woodhouse:

Radical environmentalists believed very strongly that a planet dominated by humans should be a source of anxiety rather than complacency or celebration, and that environmentalism without anxiety and even anger is less meaningful. Their ideas deserve more of a hearing today... In the Anthropocene, environmentalism must be a view from somewhere.”<sup>19</sup>

Woodhouse, rather than dismiss such opinions outright as being held by, in his words, bitter misanthropes or naïve idealists, believes that the radical environmentalists’ concerns should be taken seriously. He advises that those opinions rightly belong within the broader conversations on the environmental movement, even those opinions which protest industrial civilization itself. Woodhouse believes that these opinions arise from issues that are “complicated, distressing, and maybe even irreconcilable.”<sup>20</sup> His book is an attempt to examine what wilderness and

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<sup>15</sup> Keith Makoto Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists: A History of Radical Environmentalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 and 306.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 16. See also 302.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 27, 32, and 302.

environmentalism will mean in the twenty-first century, and uses the radical environmentalist opinions and actions as a framework for that discussion.<sup>21</sup> In many ways, Woodhouse's recommendations are consistent with the historical Indigenous ways of living in a reciprocal relationship with nature that hinges upon them being good stewards of the environment.

### **TOPICAL ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY STATE OF THE FIELD SCHOLARSHIP**

Based on the materials reviewed, the following topics discuss much, although certainly not all of, the current scholarship being undertaken on environmental history for issues concerning the United States.<sup>22</sup> The below examples include the topics of labor (both voluntary and slavery), climate change, food (including water), mining, migration, and other themes of note.

Environmental history discussing labor-related issues is, by itself, a very broad concept. The category came into its own during 2008 when Thomas Andrews authored the 2009 winner of the Bancroft Prize awarded by Columbia University trustees, with his book titled *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War*. Andrews focused this book on the coal strikes and riots in Colorado from 1913 to 1914, during which at least 75 people were killed.<sup>23</sup> As stated by Andrews, "Recent scholarship and the emerging coalitions ... have begun to erode the boundaries between environmental history and labor history."<sup>24</sup> Since 2008, that erosion has accelerated with numerous environmental history books and articles focused on labor issues, some of which like *Killing for Coal* involve voluntary labor, and others focused on forced labor

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 17 and 25.

<sup>22</sup> There are numerous topics represented by the recent scholarship on which this essay merely touches or does not directly discuss. The common theme for environmental history is the interdisciplinary academic analysis which puts these issues together in voice.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas G Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 16.

such as slavery. David Silkenat's 2022 *Scars on the Land: An Environmental History of Slavery in the American South* is an excellent example of a scholarly environmental history book that focuses on slave labor.<sup>25</sup>

*Scars on the Land*, winner of the William F. Holmes Award and the Harry E. Pratt Memorial Award, and shortlisted for the 2023 Frederick Douglass Book Prize, responds to McNeill's claim in his 2010 State of the Field Essay that environmental historians had done little to help other historians on the issue of slavery.<sup>26</sup> In *Scars on the Land*, Silkenat delves into the history combining the physical environment as affecting, and being affected by, slavery during the antebellum years in the United States South ending with the Civil War. An example is the discussion on maximizing the profitability of slaves working on tobacco crops in Virginia, thereby requiring the growers to continually migrate from one location to another. Such issues throughout the agricultural south involving rice marshes, pine forests, and cotton fields required owners to expand into new territories to remain profitable.<sup>27</sup> Silkenat makes similar arguments as to the effect of slavery in the South for gold and coal mining and mining byproducts in terms of damaging streams, forests, and the health of the slaves.<sup>28</sup> The book also discusses how the soil gave rise to illnesses, such as parasites, suffered by the slaves.<sup>29</sup> *Scars on the Land* shows how the southern slavery lifestyle scarred and, at times, destroyed the supporting environment while also harming the slaves. As discussed by Silkenat, some of these scars remain today.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> David Silkenat. *Scars on the Land: An Environmental History of Slavery in the American South* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2022).

<sup>26</sup> McNeill, "The State of the Field," 358.

<sup>27</sup> Silkenat, *Scars on the Land*, 17.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, 27, and 188.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

Many additional scholarly publications discuss environmental history within the scope of labor related issues. An interesting approach is taken by Arthur Rose as he combines asbestos-related environmental history and occupational hazards with literature in his 2022 book titled *Asbestos – The Last Modernist Object*. Rose states his goal as “Whether or not tracking the use of asbestos in literature is, ultimately, useful, I hope this book offers some useful reflections on asbestos’s imbrication within modernism, an imbrication for which, no doubt, modernism is guilty, but whose presence also enjoins us to find, in modernist literature, the possibility of thinking, and living differently.”<sup>31</sup> Rose uses the violence of asbestos to the environment and people within global commodity markets to show how asbestos went from being the magic mineral to becoming a devastating leading cause of occupational illnesses and deaths.<sup>32</sup> Rose’s discussion in Chapter 5 on Franz Kafka’s ownership of an asbestos factory and the handling of employee Nellie Kershaw’s asbestos-related lung damage from her work in that factory, shows the breadth of asbestos-related issues affecting both labor and the environment.<sup>33 34</sup>

Climate change in combination with environmental justice is now an extensive area of concern for environmental historians. A good general discussion is *Fire and Flood: A People’s History of Climate, from 1979 to the Present* by Eugene Linden, winner of the 2023 Louis J. Battan Author’s Award – Adult.<sup>35</sup> This book is listed in the Forest History Society Index for environmental history books. It provides a nice overview of the climate change issues and how

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<sup>31</sup> Arthur Rose, *Asbestos – The Last Modernist Object* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 28-29.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 5, 14, 37, 42, 46, 48, 49, 52, 61, 63, 73, 74, 83, 111, 129, 131, 135,

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 127 – 145.

<sup>34</sup> Other recently published journal articles include an outstanding 2014 publication by Stefania Barca titled “Laboring the Earth: Transnational Reflections on the Environmental History of Work” that explores in depth the intersection of work and nature, with a focus on agricultural, mining, and industrial labor. Barco’s book on this topic is scheduled for release on June 20, 2024.

<sup>35</sup> Eugene Linden, *Fire and Flood: A People’s History of Climate, from 1979 to the Present* (New York: Penguin Press, 2022).



those issues are treated in society. As stated by Linden, “Call it what you like, climate change or global warming, it’s here and it’s going to get worse, very likely far worse.”<sup>36</sup> The book continues by focusing on the evidence on the existence of climate change, the scientific consensus, public opinion as affecting political will, and financially-related issues. *Climate Change as Class War: Building Socialism on a Warming Planet* by Mathew T. Huber in 2022 focuses not on the science or belief in climate change but rather on the class struggle between producers of carbon and those affected by the result.<sup>37 38</sup> As stated by Huber, “*Climate Change as Class War* begins from the premise that the climate movement is losing, and seeks how we might not. This is a question of power... On that front, we need to build power to take on some of the wealthiest corporations in world history.”<sup>39</sup> Huber asserts that this power struggle is really a class struggle over the foundations of mankind’s relationship with nature and the climate itself. He believes that capital and private capitalists seeking profits are blocking the needed changes, and that the working class is central to fighting back.<sup>40</sup> If Huber is correct in that the problem arises from capitalism, including the ownership of private property itself, then the odds of developing a class struggle in which the global working class as envisioned by people like philosopher Karl

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>37</sup> Matthew T. Huber, *Climate Change as Class War: Building Socialism on a Warming Planet* (New York, Verso Publishing, 2022).

<sup>38</sup> There are numerous additional recent scholarly publications that focus on climate change including: *The War on the EPA: America’s Endangered Environmental Protections* by William Alley in 2020 (focuses on the Environmental Protection Agency’s handling of water and air pollution, climate change, and toxins); *Indigenous Life Around the Great Lakes: War, Climate, and Culture* by Richard Edwards IV in 2021 (discusses how the early inhabitants of the Great Lakes responded to climate change among other societal issues); *Requiem for America’s Best Idea: National Parks in the Era of Climate Change* by Michael Yochim in 2022 (discusses the author’s fatal illness in parallel with how climate change impacts the environment at national parks); and journal article “Re-thinking the present: The role of a historical focus in climate change adaptation research” by George Adamson, Matthew Hannaford, and Eleonora Rohland in 2018 (which analyzes the involvement of social processes impacting climate change).

<sup>39</sup> Huber, *Climate Change as Class War*, 12.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 12 and 15.

Marx would prevail, then history tells us that such a result may well be impossible.<sup>41</sup> At the least, however, Huber’s analysis is worthy of discussion both at the financial and political levels.

For an overall understanding of the climate change literature discussing adaptation, see the 2020 journal article by Gigi Owen titled “What makes climate change adaptation effective? A systematic review of the literature” provides an excellent starting point for further research.<sup>42</sup> As stated by Owen as she takes a deep dig into attempts at adaptation, “My results produce insights for current and future climate action including a) common attributes of adaptation initiatives reported to be effective, such as resource sharing, collective decision-making, and mutually beneficial outcomes, and b) gaps in adaptation research and practice regarding equality and justice.”<sup>43</sup> For a climate change legal survey, see the 2014 publication by Robert Meltz titled *Climate Change and Existing Law: A Survey of Legal Issues Past, Present, and Future*.<sup>44</sup> As stated by Meltz, liabilities arising out of harms caused by climate have raised a number of novel legal issues both as to substantive legal rights and concerning insurance coverage.<sup>45</sup>

Food history is also a burgeoning area of environmental research. Scholars are actively engaged in substantial research on the intersection of environmental history and food history (for purposes of this analysis, I am including water within food history). Lucas Bessire’s 2021 *Running Out: In Search of Water on the High Plains*, winner of the 2022 George Perkins Marsh Prize and a 2021 finalist for the National Book Award, is a stellar example of this genre of

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>42</sup> Gigi Owen, “What makes climate change adaptation effective? A systematic review of the literature,” *Global Environmental Change*, 62:102071, 2020, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0959378019312026>

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Meltz, *Climate Change and Existing Law: A Survey of Legal Issues Past, Present, and Future* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2014). <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc332978/>.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Summary.

scholarship.<sup>46</sup> Bessire focuses his research on his family's past in drawing down the Ogallala Aquifer, the Ogallala Aquifer itself, and the general global depletion of aquifers. Bessire, however, is not satisfied with such a narrow focus on one issue. Rather, he states that "This allows the book's central question to surface: How can we take responsibility for the future we are now making?"<sup>47</sup> That question, and Bessire's theme focused on human interaction with the environment, using his family as an example, is really what the book is all about. Bessire also discusses the unintended consequences of depleting the aquifers. Although groundwater used by billions of people as their primary water source is under threat worldwide, most of that water makes its way to the sea and substantially contributes to the rise of sea levels, "roughly on par with melting glaciers."<sup>48</sup> It seems that the location of water is as, if not more, important than the net total water. There are significant additional recent books and journal articles focused on food, many of which are mentioned in the Forest Hill Society New Scholarship files for Environmental History.<sup>49</sup>

Mining-related issues are currently a hot topic for environmental historians. One such book is *The Global Interior: Mineral Frontiers and American Power* by Megan Black, published in 2018 and the winner of the George Perkins Marsh Prize in 2019.<sup>50</sup> *The Global Interior* focuses on the United States Department of the Interior using the environment over the years to solidify and globally expand the United States' empire. Much of the book involves the political

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<sup>46</sup> Lucas Bessire, *Running Out: In Search of Water on the High Plains* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>49</sup> The scholarship includes two finalists for the George Perkins Marsh Prize in 2022. The first is Bartow Elmore's outstanding *Seed Money: Monsanto's Past and our Food Future*. (analyzes Monsanto's influence in the food system). The second is Kristin Wintersteen's *The Fishmeal Revolution: The Industrialization of the Humboldt Current*. (discusses fishing in the Peru-Chile coast to serve the tastes of consumers in the Global North).

<sup>50</sup> Megan Black. *The Global Interior: Mineral Frontiers and American Power* (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

area of the environmental history subfield. Black's use of the term "interior" is somewhat of an intentional misnomer. Rather, the book shows how the interior really includes all environmental issues globally, including among others, mining, mapping from satellites, the deep ocean, and potentially mining in space. Within these discussions, Black takes the reader into areas of contradiction involving the environment such as politics versus industry and conservation versus exploitation. The book uses these contradictions to show how the Department of the Interior was mandated to quietly seek expansion of the United States' empire by using the department's environmental technical expertise to assist other countries even when that help, such as mapping minerals by using satellites, potentially violates the sovereignty of other countries.

Another example of a recent mining scholarly environmental history publication is *Gold Metal Waters: The Animas River and the Gold King Oil Spill*, edited by Brad Clark and Peter McCormick in 2021, in which a number of authors discuss the 2015 Gold King Mine spill in Silverton, Colorado that released three million gallons of mine water, including 880,000 pounds of heavy metals that caused significant environmental damages.<sup>51</sup> *Gold Metal Waters* is an excellent example of human interaction with mining causing massive injuries to both geographic areas and people who are unable to protect themselves. That theme runs throughout environmental history books focused on mining or minerals, whether dealing with water, asbestos, sand, or otherwise. As stated in the Introduction to *Gold Metal Waters*, "More than 500,000 abandoned hardrock mines are scattered across the America West, a legacy of the boom-and-bust cycle of resource development."<sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Brad T. Clark and Pete McCormick, eds, *Gold Metal Waters: The Animas River and the Gold King Oil Spill* (Louisville, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2021).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>53</sup> Other examples of scholarship discussing this theme are *Killing for Coal* by Thomas Andrews in 2008 previously discussed in this essay under the labor section above, and *Vanishing Sands: Losing Beaches to Mining* by Orrin

Migration scholarly publications go hand-in-hand with environmental history, both in terms of the environmental changes causing migration and migration causing environmental changes. Combining migration and climate change is *State of Disaster: The Failure of U.S. Migration Policy in an Age of Climate Change* authored by Maria Cristina Garcia in 2022, an honorable mention for the 2023 Theodore Saloutos Book Prize.<sup>54</sup> Garcia discusses the horrific effects and population displacements caused by environmental changes, with a focus on both short-term natural disaster developments such as volcanos and hurricanes, and by changes in long term weather patterns.<sup>55</sup> Garcia notes the gap in both the laws of the United States and the United Nations’ definition of refugees as they do not recognize climate-related refugees.<sup>56</sup> Garcia believes that “climate change is a global challenge that requires nations to work together and share any migration burden collectively.”<sup>57</sup> Unfortunately, such coordination is the exception rather than the rule.<sup>58</sup> As to migration arising from the conduct of mankind which negatively affects the environment, Jason Vuic’s book titled *The Swamp Peddlers: How Lot Sellers, Land Scammers, and Retirees Built Modern Florida and Transformed the American Dream* discusses mankind-directed migration focusing on the lure of Florida over the years to soldiers, northerners, and pensioners by those with a financial interest to sell Florida real estate.<sup>59</sup> As stated by Vuic, this migration has been extremely destructive environmentally as “whole swathes

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Pilkey et al in 2022 (discusses how beach sand mining have eroded coastal environments and exploited labor during the time of climate change).

<sup>54</sup> Maria Cristina Garcia, *State of Disaster: The Failure of U.S. Migration Policy in an Age of Climate Change* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2022).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 38 and 171.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 20, 38, and 173.

<sup>59</sup> Jason Vuic, *The Swamp Peddlers: How Lot Sellers, Land Scammers, and Retirees Built Modern Florida and Transformed the American Dream* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

of flatwoods were either bled out or cut down, leaving scarred, swampy, denuded, near-worthless wastelands in their place.”<sup>60 61</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Many of J.R. McNeill’s predictions and recommendations in his “2010 State of the Field of Environmental History” have come to fruition and the work continues. The breadth of environmental history may be seen through the numerous recent publications and journals which specialize in aspects of the subfield, as well as the research journals and open access publications devoted to select topics within environmental history including, merely as examples *Animal History*, *Global Environmental Change*, *Environmental Science & Policy*, and the *Environmental History Journal*. Given that this historical subfield remains in its relative infancy, environmental history will continue to expand with new and extensive scholarly research.

As to my recommendation for areas of research, very few recent scholarly publications in the humanities focus on the harm to the environment, labor, and human life arising from minerals in the workplace such as asbestos, talc, lead, and silica. Given that this exposure is a long term historic world-wide environmental problem and, per the World Health Organization, asbestos causes half of the deaths in the world resulting from occupational cancer, this combination of labor, the environment, and mining seems to be a fertile area for research.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>61</sup> Examples of other themes are too numerous to discuss in full. Merely as representative subjects, for animals, a new journal titled *Animal History* published by the University of California Press will be found at <https://online.ucpress.edu/ah> after its anticipated 2025 launch. Per its website, *Animal History* will focus on historical research on animal and the human-animal relationships, including the impact of humans on animals. For those interested in ecological restoration, Laura Martin’s *Wild by Design: The Rise of Ecological Restoration*, a 2023 finalist for the George Perkins Marsh Prize, provides an excellent discussion on how people need to undo the harm inflicted on nature.

<sup>62</sup> World Health Organization, “Asbestos: elimination of asbestos-related diseases,” February 15, 2018, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/asbestos-elimination-of-asbestos-related-diseases>.

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