



Dan Chapman: A road running southward: following John Muir's journey through an endangered land

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In 1867, before co-founding the Sierra Club and gaining recognition as father of the United States' National Park system, John Muir trekked across the Southeast US from Kentucky to Florida, marveling at its natural beauty. Since then, this region has suffered a shocking amount of environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. In *A Road Running Southward*, Dan Chapman retraces Muir's steps, using his writings (*A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf* and others) as a backdrop to frame past and present environmental issues facing the region. Some of these include unchecked urban sprawl, pervasive water misuse, wanton coal and timber extraction in Southern Appalachia, and the plight of rare plants, fish, and coastal towns as the climate warms and sea level rises. I appreciated this book and as a new resident of Kentucky (the Northern edge of the region the book covers) feel it contributed to my ecoregional education. Chapman brings quite a bit of wit to his storytelling and creates intriguing portraits of the scientists, activists, and residents met during his journey. I appreciate that the author does his best not to

lionize Muir and frequently calls out the racism that sullies his writings from this period. The book jumps back and forth every few pages between discussion of Muir's journey and Chapman's present-day travelogue. This transition can be jarring at times but ultimately this serves the author's purpose well, as the status of environmental issues in the region is itself quite jarring. This book will be of general interest to anyone interested in environmental issues in the Southeast US, including but not limited to ecologists and students. I found what appeared to be one ecological gaffe—a reference to 'native' brown trout (*Salmo trutta*, introduced in North America) when brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) were the likely intent. In general, I found *A Road Running Southward* to be an accessible, informative, and useful examination of landscapes in the Southeast US that John Muir would no longer recognize.

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