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PHOTO BY PAUL KRAJEWSKI, HIGH RIVER TIMES

Bruce Masterman released his most recent book, 'One Last Cast: Reflections of an Outdoor Life.'

## Author connected to nature

PAUL KRAJEWSKI  
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In his latest book, *One Last Cast: Reflections of an Outdoor Life*, Bruce Masterman shares personal stories, anecdotes and insight into his deep-seated relationship with the outdoors.

It's a connection all people share, in one form or another, he said in an interview with *The Times*.

Through 36 tales over 240 pages, the seasoned author and veteran journalist said he wanted this compilation to reflect the feelings people experience in nature rather than the motivations that get them there.

The Town of High River councillor and SAIT instructor, described the book, his third, as "not your average how-to book." He said, "This is a much more

personal book; it's more stories than information."

"If anything, it's a 'why to'," Masterman explained. "Why should we do this stuff and what's important about it? It goes way beyond shooting things and catching fish or going on a 20-kilometre hike just to say you've done it. It's all the things along the way, and that's what I like about the outdoors."

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# Writer 'at peace' in nature

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Masterman said he enjoys experiencing nature with all his senses and with his family and friends. He describes the interactions they share in the outdoors as a learning environment, a place for growth and bonding.

From the prairies to the mountains and everywhere in between, he said it's a natural part of who he is, what he loves and where he feels most at peace.

Masterman said the stories are not simply a collection of memories, instead they are reflections on the moments people all share with nature, each crafted in a manner to inspire thoughts and feelings of one's own connection to the woods.

Outdoor enthusiasts may recognize many of the settings as they are from locations Canada-wide. However, Masterman said each tale is solely meant to resonate with the reader despite being cast from different places.

"I try not to give away too many clues because I really want most of the stories to talk about the outdoors in general," he said. "I want the reader to think, 'that reminds me of when I was growing up or when I did this with my parents.' I want people to use my stories to think about their own."

Throughout the book, Masterman talks about the enlightening lessons he learned as well as the ones he would like to pretend never happened.

"We all take things way too seriously," he said, adding some stories make light of those situations which we recall, or deny, out of embarrassment.

Masterman recalled the time he thought it would be a "brilliant idea" to tether himself to a dog while hunting for pheasants only to find himself in freezing cold water with the dog staring down at him from the shore.

Masterman described the book as

therapeutic for it allowed him to touch on a more sombre topic he faced throughout moments in his life.

"There's a chapter people might be surprised to read; I talk about depression, my own, and the one most effective way that I discovered to deal with it is to be in the outdoors," he said.

Masterman said depression set in during his teens after his mother passed away. It left for many years but returned when he was older and more successful, blindsiding him with its unwarranted resurgence.

"Suddenly it was back and I couldn't understand why," he explained. "It took me a while, but it dawned on me when I felt better that I was in the outdoors, whether I was in Kananaskis Country or out at Frank Lake or somewhere else, even in my own backyard watching the birds at the bird feeder."

Masterman said he doesn't know why he waited 15 years between books, but if the accolades he has received from writers across the country are any indication, then it was worth the wait.

Kevin Van Tighem, naturalist and author, described Masterman as a classic outdoors writer who "combines authentically-lived experience and a naturalist's sensitive observation with the kind of easy prose style that marks a real writer's craft."

Monte Hummel, author and president emeritus of the World Wildlife Fund — Canada, said Masterman's voice evokes memories of natural beauty and the feelings one receives in nature. He recommended people "disconnect, curl up with this book, and reconnect with your source, the natural world."

*One Last Cast*, published by Rocky Mountain Books, is now available on Amazon.ca for pre-order and will be released on or before April 11, Masterman added.