

NATURE HEALS

Bruce Masterman collects his nature writing

by Liz Katynski

For Bruce Masterman, spending time with nature is not about catching the largest fish, killing the biggest buck, or hiking the toughest trail. It's about the experience itself.

"Spending time with nature is powerful," says the author of *One Last Cast: Reflections of an Outdoor Life*. "This book is not a how-to. It's more of a why-to, because it's important to know nature and find our place in it."

The High River resident spent over 40 years as a journalist, and now teaches journalism at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT). Although he has written about many subjects, the outdoors has always been his main interest.

ONE LAST CAST: *Reflections of an Outdoor Life*

Bruce Masterman
Rocky Mountain Books
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"My love of nature started when I was little," says Masterman. "I will never grow out of it. I don't plan to. Not all the stories I have written were on the outdoors but the ones that meant the most to me were. I thought it might be interesting to have one body of work that brings these stories together. This was something I just needed to do."

So last summer, Masterman organized this book of articles, some new and some previously published in magazines and newspapers. This third book is his most personal one.

"I thought of doing it for my two daughters, to give to them," he says. "They were a large part of my enjoyment of the outdoors. My daughters

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are older now, and there is not so much time to fish and hike together. The book has been called a love letter to the girls, and in a way, it is."

The book shares stories of people whose experiences with nature touched his heart. "A man fights cancer and uses the outdoors to come back and normalize his life. A guy was attacked by a grizzly bear, but he didn't want to instill fear in others."

Masterman also shares how the healing power of nature alleviates his depression – he finds even an hour or so by the river deeply therapeutic. "The key is to experience nature with all of your senses," he says, "to take in the entire experience and appreciate the little things, to open yourself up and give yourself permission to get away from work and experience the possibilities."

Masterman hopes to inspire people and remind them to get outdoors as much as they can. "This might be the little push they need to get out there. Nature is so good for the body, mind, and spiritual well-being. In our fast-paced world, it is easy to get drawn away from it, distracted. It's so important to make time to get outdoors."

Whether Masterman is writing about pursuing a buck he decides not to shoot, or fishing with his daughter and wishing the moment would never end, this is a collection of stories from the heart. And whether it is as a writer, an outdoor enthusiast, or a member of town council in High River since the 2013 flood, Masterman continues to look at nature with wonder and respect.

"The book is called *One Last Cast* because I still have more fishing to do and more stories to tell." 🍷

