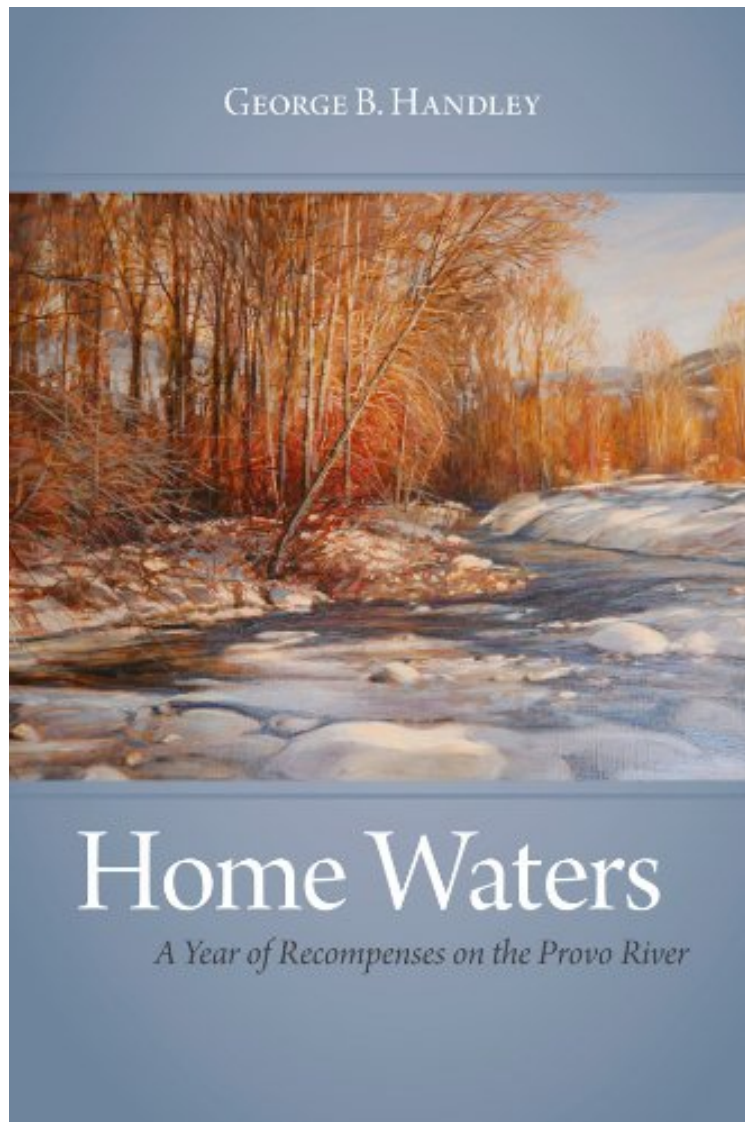


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Home Waters: A Year of Recompenses on the Provo River

George B Handley

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George B Handley : Home Waters: A Year of Recompenses on the Provo River before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Home Waters: A Year of Recompenses on the Provo River:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Utah LoveBy J. Brian WatkinsI suppose a professor must yearn for open spaces, being stuck inside all day. I read to discover new viewpoints and to have the vicarious experience a fine author can provide--typically indoors, however. The author's opinions often challenged this reviewer, but his arguments were sound and convincing. In that light, this book succeeded. This was a book that invites the reader to

evaluate opinions and to think deeply about one's impact on the world and others, it is largely about the currents that bring us to become the people we are. Introspective to only the degree a humanities professor can achieve, I think the problem I had with the work was that if we were all to adopt our author's love for the river and outdoors, the spaces sacred to the author would quickly be overrun and much of the magic found in the magnificent solitude would be lost. Perhaps the natural resistance to having beliefs tweaked, this reader perceived a hint of an attitude that people who do not share the author's appreciations are failing to honor the maker of the world. I respond that it would be hard to share a wonderful kayak ride on the Provo River with a few hundred other souls and Mr. Handley would weep to see the San Gabriel River on any given weekend, with literally thousands of people and their cars turning the natural world into a parking lot. In order to foster and protect his view of the perfect world, the author is willing to make demands on others that they scale back things that they might enjoy--be it a fine home on the bench, a drive on a mountain road or a wide expanse of soft green turf in an otherwise arid climate. A minor quibble, yet a major problem in this world; how to bring the sacred to the masses without profaning that which we seek to elevate? To what degree is it justifiable to coerce others to act in a fashion that we believe to be beneficial even if our beliefs are not shared? To be fair, the author adopts the appropriate tone of encouragement--he would change attitudes by persuasion and honest concern--I appreciated that. People build cities and communities--it's what we do. Historically they build them by sources of water--rivers. In my neck of the woods, Los Angeles, we have abused our poor river into a sterile concrete channel that is great for car chases but certainly inappropriate for an inspiring day of fly fishing. We have proved Mr. Handley's point. Yet, I can drive to wilderness from Los Angeles quicker than Mr. Handley can get to Kamas, we have tried and succeeded in preserving a great deal. We can't revert back to aboriginal lifestyles and we should be extremely careful about how we choose to impact the freedoms of others, whether it is their freedom to pursue their own lifestyle, or as the author notes, their freedom to enjoy the world in its natural state. Like life itself, the dilemma is complex and not easily resolved. But a healthy dose of respect for others usually makes it easier.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. thoughtful, graceful, real
By RangerWill
A beautiful reflection on the elements that sustain us interwoven with personal musings on a religious life, family relationships, and seeking meaning. I especially enjoyed Handley's refreshing interpretations of many familiar scriptural passages.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Nature Writing At Its Best
By darren
Beautifully written, this book alternately rushes and meanders like the Provo River itself across seasons and terrain of family, nature, love, hardship, and life.

People who flyfish know that a favorite river bend, a secluded spot in moving waters, can feel like home a place you know intimately and intuitively. In prose that reads like the flowing current of a river, scholar and essayist George Handley blends nature writing, local history, theology, environmental history, and personal memoir in his new book *Home Waters: A Year of Recompenses on the Provo River*. Handley's meditations on the local Provo River watershed present the argument that a sense of place requires more than a strong sense of history and belonging, it requires awareness and commitment. Handley traces a history of settlement along the Provo that has profoundly transformed the landscape and yet neglected its Native American and environmental legacies. As a descendent of one of the first pioneers to irrigate the area, and as a witness to the loss of orchards, open space, and an eroded environmental ethic, Handley weaves his own personal and family history into the landscape to argue for sustainable belonging. In avoiding the exclusionist and environmentally harmful attitudes that come with the territorial claims to a homeland, the flyfishing term, home waters, is offered as an alternative, a kind of belonging that is informed by deference to others, to the mysteries of deep time, and to a fragile dependence on water. While it has sometimes been mistakenly assumed that the Mormon faith is inimical to good environmental stewardship, Handley explores the faith's openness to science, its recognition of the holiness of the creation, and its call for an ethical engagement with nature. A metaphysical approach to the physical world is offered as an antidote to the suicidal impulses of modern society and our persistent ambivalence about the facts of our biology and earthly condition. *Home Waters* contributes a perspective from within the Mormon religious experience to the tradition of such Western writers as Wallace Stegner, Terry Tempest Williams, Steven Trimble, and Amy Irvine.

"the poet who attends to this river [is]... an insightful scholar,...a devout pilgrim, and an expansive guide as these home waters descend from the High Uintas through defining stories of family and identity." --Stephen Trimble --Back Cover

"practices theology like a doctor practices CPR: not as secondhand theory but as a chest-cracking, lung-inflating, life-saving intervention.... It's what you've been wanting to read." --Adam Miller --Times and Seasons

"...nature writing at its best.... a call for his people to wake up and embrace the stewardship required of them. And it is some stunningly good reading.....Read this book. It will change you." --Steve Peck --By Common Consent

"extends... beyond a particular creed or geographic area to address broader issues related to habitation and brings into conversation... theology and place studies." --Paul Formisano, ISLE

"What a pleasing book. George Handley has calmly scripted a place-based masterwork.... again and again, the writing lifted me with its precise similes or its able flexing of metaphorical muscle." --Jeffrey McCarthy, Western American Literature

From the Inside Flap "Handley has made a most uniquely compelling case for how the physical world--both environs as well as our flesh--provides landscapes in

which one touches the divine in the most intimate ways. In exploring the watershed of his ancestors, Handley has articulated how LDS culture has compromised the health of the systems that sustain life, and in the same breath he has illuminated the Mormon stories and doctrine that offer possibilities for a re-creation of God's works, and indeed, our own souls." Amy Irvine, author of *Trespass: Living at the Edge of the Promised Land* From the Back Cover "Wallace Stegner wrote: 'No place, not even a wild place, is a place until it has had that human attention that at its highest reach we call poetry.' In this fortunate pairing of place and poet, we learn about Utah's Provo River--a paradox of wildness and extinction, pioneering and restoration. We learn that the river is embedded in community--Mormon community--a fact inseparable from the place. And we learn about the poet who attends to this river, a man who turns out to be an insightful scholar, an exuberant fly fisherman, a devout pilgrim, and an expansive guide as these home waters descend from the High Uintas through defining stories of family and identity, to pour down the Jordan River to the Great Salt Lake."--Stephen Trimble, author of *Bargaining for Eden: The Fight for the Last Open Spaces in America*