

Sustainability Reading and Resources

Summer 2023

Fiction:

- **Barbara Kingsolver** is an incomparable fiction writer and scientist who addresses human and natural ecosystems, cultures, and scientific ideas with beautiful language and compelling storytelling. Her characterizations are tender, unflinching, and deeply moving, and her storylines convey a sense of wonder among, or in spite of, the human drama.
- For those looking for a specific title, I highly recommend **The Overstory** by Richard Powers, which can be read a chapter at a time without much effort, but weaves complicated ideas and storylines together, about trees, but each species is part of a larger community, building a picture of how people can become bonded to the natural world, and to a human movement, while lyrically drawing the reader into the habitat of the Pacific Northwest, and the human and ecological systems at play there, not least, those of the human heart.

NonFiction:

- Focused on New England in particular, **Douglas Tallamy** is another prolific author, currently having a well-deserved moment. He is also a compelling, affordable speaker with a clear message pertinent to every land owner and voter.
- Like many readers, I savored **Braiding Sweet Grass by Robin Wall Kimmerer**; for me it was like a series of meditations, if occasionally angry ones, and brought me back to my childhood in Central New York. We had a school curriculum that included Iroquois History, but it was more

anthropological than interdisciplinary or cultural. Kimmerer tries to connect her readers with a culture we need to adopt again, at least in part, if we wish to thrive as a species. One where we understand we are part of a living system, not above, apart or outside of one. The planet, and lots of life, can and will persist without us. We will not persist without it or many life forms that modern science has yet to understand, because we have evolved together. Protection of ecosystems and protecting wild lands, is essential to human and planetary health.

- [Project Drawdown](#) started as a book and has become a website. Actually, it started as a community of global scientists pooling their research to better understand climate change and quantify how to address it in a highly credentialed, peer reviewed compilation. The book is a bible for anyone interested in thinking deeply about climate issues and action. It can be found at the JV Fletcher Library.



[Project Drawdown](#)

drawdown.org

- Speaking of science, understanding tipping points and feedback loops in our natural systems, is very important for thinking about climate.



[Climate Emergency: Feedback Loops](#)

In this series of five short films, learn why natural warming loops have scientists alarmed—and why we have less time than we think.

feedbackloopsclimate.com

- This [NASA site](#) is a useful tool for family learning. While the topic can be somewhat scary, this video series is accessible for most ages.



[The Study of Earth as an Integrated System](#)

Earth system science is the study of how scientific data stemming from various fields of research, such as the atmosphere, oceans, land ice and others, fit together to form the current picture of our changing climate.

climate.nasa.gov

- NOAA has a curriculum for students on this topic as well: <https://www.climate.gov/teaching/resources/climate-feedback-loops>

[Climate Feedback Loops](#)

This is the seventh of nine lessons in the 'Visualizing and Understanding the Science of Climate Change' website. This lesson addresses climate feedback loops and how these loops help drive and regulate Earth's unique climate system.

www.climate.gov

- Another great reference, which brings us back to books, is **Life Without Plastic, The Practical Step-by-Step Guide to Avoiding Plastic to Keep your Family and the Planet Healthy** by Chantal Plamondon and Jay Sinha. Comprehensively researched, explained clearly, in layman's terms, with tools for making changes, it belongs on every household bookshelf. The website and shopping platform are not as pure in mission or implementation. Like so many things under the sustainability umbrella, making changes is a long, incremental process, and this reference gives the reader the tools to start and then build on each success, confident in each decision.
- The **Environmental Working Group** also does great work to help families make non-toxic purchasing decisions.



[Environmental Working Group – Know your choices | Environmental Working Group](https://www.environmentalworkinggroup.org/learn/know-your-choices)

The Environmental Working Group is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to helping you live your healthiest life.

www.ewg.org