

Disabled Ecologies: A Radical Rethinking of the Role of Disability Within Environmental Movements

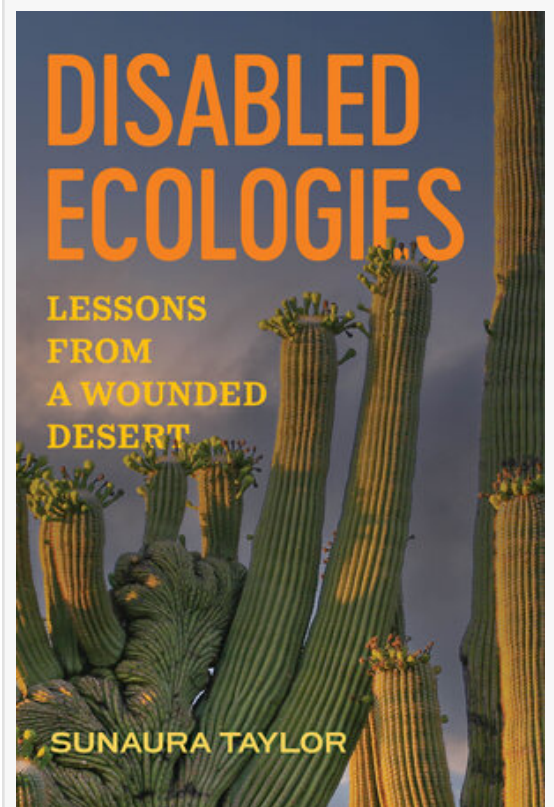
Sunaura Taylor argues disability's powerful role in reshaping our comprehension of ecology and activism in her latest book.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Deep below the ground in Tucson, Arizona, lies an aquifer forever altered by the detritus of a postwar Superfund site. This contamination has had detrimental effects throughout the largely Mexican American community living above. Groundbreaking scholar, disability rights activist, and artist [Sunaura Taylor](#) draws on her own complex relationship with this long-ago injured landscape, radically rethinking the role of disability within environmental movements. Her new book, "[Disabled Ecologies: Lessons From a Wounded Desert](#)," published on May 21, 2024, by the [University of California Press](#), takes us with her to follow the site's disabled ecology—the networks of disability, both human and wild, that are created when ecosystems are corrupted and profoundly altered.

Growing up in Georgia, Taylor was unschooled—a form of child-led home-schooling that fostered a worldview rooted in curiosity and learning. Through this unique lens, she began to connect attitudes toward disabled people with attitudes toward animals, and later wrote her first book, "Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation," which received the 2018 American Book Award. An Assistant Professor in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management at the University of California, Berkeley, Taylor's scholarly pursuits have garnered attention from publications like Orion Magazine, The Baffler, and Psychology Today. Now, with "Disabled Ecologies," she delves deeper, highlighting the inseparability of the disablement of nature and the disablement of people.

Naomi Klein, author of "Doppelganger," says, "Taylor's is a unique and generous genius. With



"Disabled Ecologies: Lessons from a Wounded Desert" by Sunaura Taylor

breath-catching insight and enveloping compassion, she shares a secret of epochal urgency: people living with injury and impairment have much to teach about how to survive, and perhaps even thrive, on an injured and impaired planet." Charting multispecies coalitions through the Sonoran Desert and the Tucson Basin's aquifer, Taylor uncovers entanglements that reveal disability as one of the defining features of environmental devastation and resistance. These stories tell of debilitating and sometimes life-ending injuries, but they also map out alternative modes of connection, solidarity, and resistance—an environmentalism of the injured.



Sunaura Taylor

An invaluable addition to the literature of the Environmental Justice movement, "Disabled Ecologies" is a rallying cry to

center the needs of the most vulnerable. Taylor not only offers a way forward for all of us; she presents readers with a fundamentally new understanding of disability and what it means to live with injury. Rob Nixon, author of "Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor," says, "Taylor has gifted us a deeply original, brilliantly written work on the entanglements between

ecological harm and human disability. This book illuminates what Taylor calls 'the expansive web of injury' that binds human bodies to bodies of land, water, and other beings."

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'Disabled Ecologies' is a vital work of scholarship and a rousing call for solidarity between ourselves and the natural environments from which we are inseparable."

Ed Yong, author of "An Immense World"

A deeply personal reflection on what disability means in an era of increasing multispecies disablement, "Disabled Ecologies" transcends environmental discourse. It is a powerful call to reflect on the kinds of care, treatment, and assistance this age of disability requires.

ABOUT THE BOOK

"Disabled Ecologies: Lessons from a Wounded Desert" is a powerful analysis and call to action that reveals disability as one of the defining features of environmental devastation and resistance, released on May 21, 2024, by the University of California Press.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sunaura Taylor is an artist and writer. She is the author of "Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation" (The New Press, 2017), which received the 2018 American Book Award. Taylor has written for a range of popular media outlets and her artworks have been exhibited widely both nationally and internationally. She works at the intersection of disability studies, environmental justice, multispecies studies, and art practice. She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management at the University of California, Berkeley. Her latest book is "Disabled Ecologies: Lessons from a Wounded Desert" (University of California Press, 2024).

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