
“Wild Trees” book reviews please.

Posted by Treeman - 05/23/2007 08:31pm

Ok, OK. Now that we have gotten over the goo goo, gaa gaa hand waving about the fact that something about tree climbing would be presented to the general public, it is time for your reviews. I know even “tree grunts” pick up a book or so (read the book for the definition of tree grunt) in their lifetime. So what do you think?

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Posted by Oldtimer - 05/24/2007 03:03pm

I have not read the book yet. So not opinion here. From What I seen posted so far it is Ok and some people like it as a good reading set of stories.

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Posted by TearDoc - 07/09/2007 03:18pm

Read the book (nearly finished) and it's the reason I'm here.
Enjoyed the read less for the technical aspects than for the development of the characters and their motivation.
Hope it doesn't become the arborist version of A River Runs Through It resulting in zillions of people climbing trees w/o proper training or equipment. That said I would LOVE to give it a try.
BTW great website!
Randy

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Posted by JimK - 07/09/2007 04:30pm

Hi Randy,

Welcome to the tree trekking scene. My climbing days started in Louisville. I return to the family farm in Breckenridge County for a climb nearly once a year.

I was energized by the book and the adventures within. Although I believe that the uninitiated need to read it with some caution. As an example, I hold the belief that a small percentage of climbs need to be canceled, where conditions aren't appropriate. That doesn't make material for an adventure book.

With respect to giving it a try, there's a group tree trekking out of metropolitan Cincinnati - on the Ky side. Also, you may be able to catch a local arborist at this site as follows: www.treebuzz.com

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Posted by TearDoc - 07/09/2007 05:10pm

Thanks Jim,

Lots of friends in Da'Ville b/c I like kayaking with the Vikings from there. Things have gotten so out of hand that I have almost become a Cards fan:>)

Not sure my 63 yo arthritic bod can handle another passtime but I have always loved trees and covered my 1 1/2 acre home lot with mostly native trees.

My office is in Fft and I have a friend who has just bought a 120 acre old growth forest on the edge of town. Gonna see if he would be interested in a trip to Atlanta to learn to climb.

I have enjoyed a little rope work in whitewater rescue classes but couldn't put a Z-drag together if I had a gun to my head now.

I may need to find something new what w/this drought. I wonder if the trees aren't more easily harmed in such dry weather?

I have already learned a lot just from this forum and the BOOK. One thing certain is that I would now know not to climb

the 8 ft diameter Sycamore tree on the Elkhorn Creek in my backyard.
Randy

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Posted by moss - 07/09/2007 07:32pm

I'm not too concerned that people will read the book and go out and hurt themselves. If anything they would be extremely cautious after reading about the several close calls so graphically described. Preston is very consistent with the message that it takes training and practice to become a safe tree climber.

There are many rec climbers 63 and older, in fact it seems that many of us are in that age group. There are climbing techniques that make it possible for people with varying degrees of physical limitation able to climb comfortably. I urge you to keep going with the idea that you can get up and enjoy being in a tree.
-moss

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Posted by JimK - 07/09/2007 10:35pm

Randy,

I'll echo Moss' message that age and physical capabilities aren't barriers to this. You're likely less than one standard deviation of the average age of active climbers. There are techniques that vary with preference. Just as an example, RADS (Rope Ascending Descending System) is a common method for climbers making canopy entry with additional mechanical advantage.

You can click on this link as follows:

[RADS Explained by New Tribe](#)

You certainly won't regret a trip to Atlanta to pick up a wonderful pastime.

Also in case you aren't aware of this fact, Moss is the illustrator of "The Wild Trees".

Though I started as a Card, I ended up a Hilltopper. Kentucky is a beautiful state isn't it?

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Posted by TearDoc - 07/10/2007 08:56am

Moss,
I hope you didn't think I was criticizing the book--I have enjoyed it thoroughly. Your illustrations are excellent. I know something about illustrating books after my oldest daughter, Julie, spent a year living in Barry Moser's house and helping him when he was illustrating the Pennyroyale-Caxton bible. I met Barry and made off w/ a first edition copy of A River Runs Through It that he had illustrated. Also a set of prints from the book and a first edition of his bible--sadly they were all lost when my home burned to the ground in Feb, 2006.

Jim, I appreciate your encouragement and actually feel that my upper body strength is decent from kayaking. It's my knees that suck. I don't doubt I could pull my wgt (although 20 #'s heavier than necessary) up a rope w/ the equipment. Probably what worries me most is my OCD's--Osteochondritis Dissecans in the knee and Obsessive/Compulsive Disorder in the personality. I get hooked on another hobby and my SO might dump me.

Nothing wrong w/ the Hilltoppers:->)

BTW I live on Treetop Ct in Georgetown and my back porch and deck are 2/3 up the oak and buckeye trees on the hillside running 80 ft to the creek below. Still I would love to climb some big'uns.

Randy

Posted by moss - 07/10/2007 12:25pm

Originally posted by TearDoc

Moss,
I hope you didn't think I was criticizing the book--I have enjoyed it thoroughly.

Oh not at all and I wouldn't mind if you did.

The RADs technique that Jim mentioned can be done using arms only, it's a 3:1 mechanical advantage rig, there are other ways as well to get around funky knees.

-moss

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Posted by Link774 - 07/10/2007 02:33pm

Randy,

Check out this trip report from moss:

I climbed with the one-legged Frenchman and all I got was this lousy T-shirt!

Pretty awesome!

- Link

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Posted by TearDoc - 07/10/2007 06:24pm

Very cool story about the "Frenchman." I love seeing "handicapped" folks gain new freedom. We have several paraplegics who kayak and I really enjoyed watching others ski at Winterpark, Colorado.

Guess I'll have to steal a weekend and drop down to Hotlanta:>)

My buddy w/ the forest wanted to know why I wanted to climb trees...if you gotta ask...:(

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Posted by scottdb - 07/10/2007 07:17pm

The Wild Trees is a great read!

Author Richard Preston has what it takes to keep a reader occupied and interested. He does a good job of describing the folks he writes about and he has backed up his time spent in the trees with good research.

I was already a fan of Preston's work and was not surprised that one of his mentors is the great author Jonn Mcphee. If you like to read check out Preston's

'The Hot Zone" etc. and McPhees extensive list of titles.

Scott

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Book review

Posted by The Tangler - 08/01/2007 05:21pm

I really enjoyed the book. It was strange though because I was at OSU in 91- 93 and am familiar with the area. I was glad

to read that Steve was able to get funded to continue the adventure. I thought the characters were a bit odd but that must be what it takes to be a trailblazer. I don't have any pressing desire to go 350'- though I would like to take my family to the Redwoods. It has been 25 years since I was there. Preston did a great job I think and I found it an easy read. I sensed that Rec climbers are feared for what they could do to the trees but from what I have read here we are a careful bunch. I hope we can convince the world of this as our numbers grow.

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Who else has read the book?

Posted by Treeman - 08/06/2007 08:44pm

So do busy tree climbers only read during inclement weather? Who else has read the book through? Caught up, y'all (let's hear from you).

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Posted by treesandsurf - 09/04/2007 01:33am

I read the book when it first came out and really enjoyed it. Preston is quite good at keeping the story interesting. I definitely thought Preston sounded a bit nerdy sometimes and the terminology he used was sort of comical, but that's okay because I imagine most of the people who have or will read this book have never climbed a tree, so that was his main audience. Overall a good read :)

jp:D

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very interesting

Posted by 3CLIMBR - 09/04/2007 10:26pm

I had no idea that Richard Preston had done so much climbing. It certainly made his perspective and involvement in The Wild Trees much more intimate.

I really valued the honest portrayal of Stephen Sillett. It made me less uptight about how I feel I am viewed as a recreational climber.

It was good to get more understanding about climbing techniques for tall trees.

Ultimately, I was left with more understanding about the dangers and rewards of climbing wild trees.

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