The final two chapters take an abrupt turn to postwar debates about park creation in Yosemite and Yellowstone, and then to settlement policies in the South and among Native Americans out West. While these subjects might seem like a detour from earlier chapters, they lead to the book’s most original contributions. One of the more surprising findings relates to the creation of national parks. The conservation question drove a wedge within the party between those who believed that natural beauty could nourish republican virtues and old Free-Soilers who believed that all land—even Yosemite and Yellowstone—should be divided into small farms. The final chapter examines how agrarian thought shaped policy intended to bring freed people and Natives Americans into the national fold after the war. Some readers might take issue with the provocative claim that Republicans “had an environmental view of citizenship,” but Dean makes a strong case that the ideology of soil and civilization hewn in the congressional turmoil in the 1850s helped structure postwar Republican policies in distant regions, long after war’s end (p. 136).

This text’s chief contribution is to the political history of nineteenth-century America, as well as environmental history. As a monograph that deals so extensively with discussions about farming and the wilderness, it might disappoint environmental historians that the author does not dirty his hands with the nitty-gritty details of husbandry or the role of the landscape itself in shaping Americans’ lives. Regardless, readers interested in both the Civil War era and environmental history will be rewarded with valuable insights in this well-executed and attractively designed volume.

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John F. Freeman has written the first comprehensive history of the Black Hills National Forest. Arguing that the forest is a prototype for the US Forest Service (USFS), he follows the agency’s practices in the forest from its beginning to the present, effectively demonstrating how examining a single forest can elucidate national trends in
natural resource management over more than a century. From the arrival of white Americans during the Black Hills gold rush of the 1870s, through the work pioneering foresters Gifford Pinchot and Henry Graves did there, and onward to the rapid growth of forest production after World War II, the rise of environmentalism, and the contested forest politics of the present, Freeman guides the reader to an understanding of how federal forestry policy has shaped the region.

Freeman’s broader story will be familiar to environmental historians. A resource rush and the privatization of the forest to timber and mining companies marked the initial white conquest of the forest from Native Americans. Pinchot used the forest as an experiment to apply European forestry models to the United States and worked with Wyoming and South Dakota ranchers and politicians to gain support for what became the Black Hills National Forest. Over the decades, shifting definitions of sustained-yield forestry led to varying management practices, but by and large the USFS worked to get out the cut in the Black Hills, as it did through the national forests writ large. The agency worked with local interests to fight for total fire and beetle suppression throughout its history. It dealt with rising tourism throughout the twentieth century, attempting to balance forest production with growing demands for recreation. The rise of environmentalism in the last fifty years challenged management of the Black Hills National Forest in new ways, with wilderness politics and lawsuits limiting the ability of the USFS to continue its long-standing pro-harvest policies.

Freeman is generous to the USFS and its officials, writing, for instance, of “the criteria of sustainability worked out by well-trained and well-intentioned supervisors and staff” (p. xi). Perhaps they were well trained and well intentioned, but the history of the agency and its actions is more problematic than Freeman admits. Moreover, within the USFS the concept of sustainable forestry was heavily contested, particularly during the 1930s when Ferdinand Silcox led the agency. Freeman downplays the extent to which the USFS served the interests of timber companies over other stakeholders. He clearly believes in the Forest Service as an institution, which informs his perspective on the topic for better and for worse. The argument that the Black Hills National Forest is the prototype for the USFS is also a bit overplayed. It was one of the first forests managed by the federal government and the site of the first sale of federally owned timber to a private party, but the government has not consistently used it as a unique place for forestry experimentation. Rather, the book’s true value is as a case study of federal policy.

Freeman’s actors are primarily forest policymakers and South Dakota politicians. Many stakeholders in the forests do not receive much attention. Forest workers and their perspectives on the
changing forests are completely absent from the book while the residents of Rapid City and the tourists who drive much of the Black Hills economy play only a walk-on role. Environmentalists play a larger role in the story, as does local resistance to development in recent years. Ultimately, Freeman’s narrative is of a well-intentioned USFS forced to shift priorities in response to the times but with a constant mission of managing the forest for the agency’s mission of multiple uses.

Overall, this is a solid entry into forest history. It’s not the final word on the history of the Black Hills National Forest, but any future researcher will need to reckon with this book.

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Seeing Green: The Use and Abuse of American Environmental Images is a complementary extension to Finis Dunaway’s first book, Natural Visions: The Power of Images in American Environmental Reform (University of Chicago Press, 2005). In this second book, Dunaway continues a central theme begun in his earlier work, the importance of images as active rhetorical agents in the shaping of mainstream American environmentalism. Picking up where Natural Visions left off, Seeing Green completes the American environmental history timeline, focusing not on the conservation movement of the first half of the twentieth century but on the modern environmental movement that evolved in post–World War II America and extends into the present.

In tackling images from this time period, Dunaway’s primary goals are twofold: to contemplate the meanings these images imbued at the time of their production, and to demonstrate how such meanings embed environmental legacies that continue to perpetuate through time. Organized into a three-part chronology—the emergence of the modern environmental movement in the 1960s and its solidification in the 1970s Earth Day event, the subsequent energy crisis of the 1970s, which then frame the neoliberal policies of the 1980s and