

Environmental storytelling: book suggestions from the Storytell listserv (Feb. 2022)

My own suggestion: [*Earth Care, World Folktales to Talk About*](#), Margaret Read MacDonald

Jennifer Ramsay wrote: I'd recommend The Earth Story collection.

You can buy the books or download the stories on the following

website: <https://theearthstoriescollection.org/en/home/>

You could go one step further and become an Earth Storyteller who actively tells these stories 😊

Fran Stallings wrote: *Storytelling and Ecology: Empathy, Enchantment and Emergence in the Use of Oral Narratives* by Anthony Nanson, which has just won a Storytelling World award.

Unfortunately this edition seems to be ferociously expensive, but maybe university libraries will get a copy they can lend.

His earlier *Storytelling and Ecology: Reconnecting Nature and People Through Oral Narrative* may be more readily available.

Allison Galbraith wrote: Dr Alette Willis and I put a collection of folktales with an environmental theme together.

The introductory chapters look at the role storytelling can play in relation to the environmental crisis:

Dancing With Trees, Eco-Tales from the British Isles, by Allison Galbraith & Alette Willis, (2017, The History Press) <https://www.hive.co.uk/Product/Allison-Galbraith/Dancing-with-Trees--Eco-Tales-from-the-British-Isles/20456473>

Jay Leeming wrote: *Wisdom of the Mythtellers* by Sean Kean is excellent— more thoughtful than practical, perhaps, but it does contain stories as well.

Gail Herman wrote: *Nature Tales*, Pleasant DeSpain. It is not a pedagogical book.

Paul wrote: *Storytelling for a Greener World: Environment, Community and Story-based Learning* (now republished as *Storytelling for Nature Connection: Environment, Community and Story Based learning*)

The editors are Alida Gersie, Anthony Nanson, and Edward Schieffelin. It's also expensive now, as a paperback, although I don't think I paid that much for it last year, but not so expensive as an e-book.

Suzanne Whitby wrote (with a degree of understatement) :

I have quite a lot of material on storytelling and partly the environment, but mostly climate change, sustainability, behaviour change and creating a sense of place, all of which feed into my PhD. Below are a few books, and quite a few links.

Books: *here are a few books that might be helpful - they are about storytelling and the environment, and often climate change, but perhaps a few bits and pieces might be of interest:*

Climate Change and Storytelling: Narratives and Cultural Meaning in Environmental Communication. By Annika Arnold

Myths of the Sacred Tree by Moyra Cladecoot.

Storytelling and Ecology: Empathy, Enchantment and Emergence in the Use of Oral Narratives (Bloomsbury Advances in Ecolinguistics). By Anthony Nanson

The Earth Stories Collection: How to Make Another World Possible with Myths, Legends, and Traditional Stories by Grian A. Cutanda. Seville, Spain: The Avalon Project, 2019.

Articles: below are a list of papers and articles that may or may not be helpful. Some are about traditional storytelling, some about "storytelling through branding" or "storytelling through digital channels" or "storytelling in climate communication", but there are also some interesting articles about how stories help etc. Sorry, there are quite a few!!

Andersson, I. (2016) "Green cities" going greener? Local environmental policy-making and place branding in the "Greenest City in Europe", *European planning studies*, 24(6), pp. 1197–1215. doi:10.1080/09654313.2016.1152233.

Bayer, S. and Hettinger, A. (2019) 'Storytelling: A Natural Tool to Weave the Threads of Science and Community Together', *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America*, 100(2), p. e01542–n/a. doi:10.1002/bes2.1542.

Beck, M. (2018) 'Telling stories with models and making policy with stories: an exploration', *Climate policy*, 18(7), pp. 928–941. doi:10.1080/14693062.2017.1404439.

Benites-Lazaro, L., Mello-Théry, N., and Lahsen, M. (2017) 'Business storytelling about energy and climate change: The case of Brazil's ethanol industry', *Energy research & social science*, 31, pp. 77–85. doi:10.1016/j.erss.2017.06.008.

Bieniek-Tobasco, A. *et al.* (2019) 'Communicating climate change through documentary film: imagery, emotion, and efficacy', *Climatic change*, 154(1-2), pp. 1–18. doi:10.1007/s10584-019-02408-7.

Bloomfield, E.F. and Manktelow, C. (2021) 'Climate communication and storytelling', *Climatic change*, 167(3-4). doi:10.1007/s10584-021-03199-6.

Buirski, L. (2013) 'Climate change and drama : the youth learning about and responding to climate change issues through drama', *Global media journal (African ed.)*, 7(1), pp. 40–46. doi:10.5789/7-1-124.

Cameron, L. *et al.* (2021) 'Evidence-based communication on climate change and health: Testing videos, text, and maps on climate change and Lyme disease in Manitoba, Canada', *PLoS one*, 16(6), p. e0252952–. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0252952.

Capstick, S., Hemstock, S. and Senikula, R. (2018) 'Perspectives of artist–practitioners on the communication of climate change in the Pacific', *International journal of climate change strategies and management*, 10(2), pp. 323–339. doi:10.1108/IJCCSM-03-2017-0058.

Castelló, E. and Montagut, M. (2019) 'Framing Forest Fires and Environmental Activism: a Storytelling Contest about Human Intervention in Nature', *Communication & Society*, 32(4), pp. 291–306. doi:10.15581/003.32.4.291-306.

Chung, J.H. *et al.* (2020) 'Promoting Reforestation to Landowners: The Role of Advice-Giving through Information, Efficacy, Narratives, and Identification in Storytelling', *Journal of forestry*, 118(5), pp. 474–486. doi:10.1093/jofore/fvaa028.

Cortes Arevalo, V.J. *et al.* (2020) 'Storylines for practice: a visual storytelling approach to strengthen the science-practice interface', *Sustainability science*, 15(4), pp. 1013–1032. doi:10.1007/s11625-020-00793-y.

Cronon, W. (1992) 'A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative', *The Journal of American history (Bloomington, Ind.)*, 78(4), pp. 1347–1376. doi:10.2307/2079346. See also: https://www.williamcronon.net/writing/cronon_place_for_stories_1991.pdf

- Dahlstrom, M.F. (2014) 'Using narratives and storytelling to communicate science with nonexpert audiences', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences - PNAS*, 111(Supplement 4), pp. 13614–13620. doi:10.1073/pnas.1320645111.
- Dahlstrom, M.F. and Scheufele, D.A. (2018) '(Escaping) the paradox of scientific storytelling', *PLoS biology*, 16(10), pp. e2006720–e2006720. doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.2006720.
- Daigle, J.J. et al. (2019) 'Traditional Lifeways and Storytelling: Tools for Adaptation and Resilience to Ecosystem Change', *Human ecology : an interdisciplinary journal*, 47(5), pp. 777–784. doi:10.1007/s10745-019-00113-8.
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- Di Chiro, G. (2018) 'Canaries in the Anthropocene: storytelling as degentrification in urban community sustainability', *Journal of environmental studies and sciences*, 8(4), pp. 526–538. doi:10.1007/s13412-018-0494-5.
- Dudman, K. and de Wit, S. (2021) 'An IPCC that listens: introducing reciprocity to climate change communication', *Climatic change*, 168(1-2). doi:10.1007/s10584-021-03186-x.
- Ekholm, S. (2020) 'Swedish mothers' and fathers' worries about climate change: a gendered story', *Journal of risk research*, 23(3), pp. 288–296. doi:10.1080/13669877.2019.1569091.
- Emily Höckert (2020) 'On scientific fabulation: storytelling in the more-than-human world', in *Ethics and Politics of Space for the Anthropocene*. Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 51–70. doi:10.4337/9781839108709.00009.

Findings on Climate Change Reported by Investigators at Deakin University (Contesting imaginaries in the Australian city: Urban planning, public storytelling and the implications for climate change) (2020) *Global Warming Focus*. NewsRX LLC, p. 323–.

Fish, C. (2020) 'Storytelling for Making Cartographic Design Decisions for Climate Change Communication in the United States', *Cartographica*, 55(2), pp. 69–84. doi:10.3138/cart-2019-0019.

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Frederick, E. (2019) 'Top stories: Mountain-moving climate change, an oxygen-starved city, and rats playing hide-and-seek', *Science (American Association for the Advancement of Science)* [Preprint]. doi:10.1126/science.aaz4998.

Gay-Antaki, M. (2021) 'Grounding climate governance through women's stories in Oaxaca, Mexico', *Gender, place and culture : a journal of feminist geography*, 28(9), pp. 1234–1257. doi:10.1080/0966369X.2020.1789563.

Gesa Mackenthun (2021) 'Sustainable Stories: Managing Climate Change with Literature', *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland)*, 13(4049), p. 4049–. doi:10.3390/su13074049.

Goldstein, B.E. *et al.* (2015) 'Narrating Resilience: Transforming Urban Systems Through Collaborative Storytelling', *Urban studies (Edinburgh, Scotland)*, 52(7), pp. 1285–1303. doi:10.1177/0042098013505653.

Gustafson, A. *et al.* (2020) 'Personal Stories Can Shift Climate Change Beliefs and Risk Perceptions: The Mediating Role of Emotion', *Communication reports (Pullman, Wash.)*, 33(3), pp. 121–135. doi:10.1080/08934215.2020.1799049.

Harcourt, R. *et al.* (2021) 'Envisioning Climate Change Adaptation Futures Using Storytelling Workshops', *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland)*, 13(12), p. 6630–. doi:10.3390/su13126630.

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Harris, D.M. (2021) 'Storying climate knowledge: Notes on experimental political ecology', *Geoforum*, 126, pp. 331–339. doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2021.08.011.

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- Jones, M.D. (2014) 'Communicating Climate Change: Are Stories Better than "Just the Facts"?'', *Policy studies journal*, 42(4), pp. 644–673. doi:10.1111/psj.12072.

Jones, M.D. (2014) 'Cultural Characters and Climate Change: How Heroes Shape Our Perception of Climate Science', *Social science quarterly*, 95(1), pp. 1–39.
doi:10.1111/ssqu.12043.

Jones, M.D. and Song, G. (2014) 'Making Sense of Climate Change: How Story Frames Shape Cognition', *Political psychology*, 35(4), pp. 447–476. doi:10.1111/pops.12057.

Kirby, D.A. (2018) 'Harnessing the Persuasive Power of Narrative: Science, Storytelling, and Movie Censorship, 1930–1968', *Science in context*, 31(1), pp. 85–106.
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Krisberg, K. (2020) 'Personal storytelling key to climate communication.(Health workers effective messengers)', *The Nation's health (1971)*, 50(2), pp. S1–S6.

Law, M. *et al.* (2021) 'The Last Hurrah (and The Long Haul): co-creation of theatre as climate change education', *Journal of geography in higher education*, 45(4), pp. 549–562.
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See: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214629617302050>.

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- Nita, M. (2020) *"Inside Story" Participatory Storytelling and Imagination in Eco-pedagogical Contexts*. Routledge.
- O'Neill, S. and Pidcock, R. (2021) 'Introducing the Topical Collection: "Climate change communication and the IPCC"', *Climatic change*, 169(3-4), pp. 19–19. doi:10.1007/s10584-021-03253-3.
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Youngsoo Lee and Joosung Lee (2020) 'Interactive Game-Content-based Storytelling for the Environment', *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland)*, 12(8229), p. 8229–. doi:10.3390/su12198229.

Margaret Read MacDonald wrote: **From NSN bibliography**

FOLKTALE COLLECTIONS WITH ECOLOGICAL THEMES

Celebrating the Earth: Stories, Experiences, and Activities by Norma Livo. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 2000. Learn about the natural world through folktales, personal narrative and hands-on activities.

Day of the Moon Shadow: Tales w/ Ancient Answers to Scientific Questions by Judy Gail and Linda Houlding. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1995. Contemporary science through the viewpoint of the ancients; a unique multicultural and scientific resource.

Earth Care: World Folktales to Talk About by Margaret Read MacDonald. Atlanta, GA: August House, 2005. A companion to *Peace Tales: World Folktales to Talk About*. 41 tales chosen because they make some point about man's relationship to the earth.

The Earth Stories Collection: How to Make Another World Possible with Myths, Legends, and Traditional Stories by Grian A. Cutanda. Seville, Spain: The Avalon Project, 2019. Detailed discussion of rationale for using folktales, plus 45 stories from the Earth Stories Collection. <https://theearthstoriescollection.org/en/home>

Earthtales: Storytelling in Times of Change by Alida Gershie. London: Greenprint, 1992. An extensive collection of well-chosen tales. Useful as a storytelling source.

Family of Earth and Sky: Indigenous Tales of Nature from Around the World by John Elder and Hertha D. Wong. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994. A widely ranging collection, not necessarily tellable, but thought-provoking.

Hidden Stories in Plants: Unusual and Easy-to-tell Stories from Around the World Together with Creative Things to Do While Telling Them by Anne Pellowski. New York: MacMillan, 1990. Tellable stories, with activities.

Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac, Fulcrum Inc, 1988.

The Language of the Birds by David M. Guss. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1985. Guss includes poetry, essays, and folklore in this thoughtful collection. You might not find tellable material here, but you will gain from experiencing the book.

Learning from the Land: Teaching Ecology through Stories and Activities by Brian "Fox" Ellis, Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 1996.

Myths of the Sacred Tree by Moyra Cladecoot. Rochester, New Vt.: Destiny Books, 1993. Cladecoot is interested in the mythological meanings of trees, her stories go deep, and will interest those who tell primarily to adult listeners.

The Rain Forest Storybook: Traditional Stories from the Peoples of South America, Africa, and South-East Asia by Rosalind Kervin. Cambridge University Press, 1994. Great collection of exciting tales.

Spinning Tales, Weaving Hope: Stories of Peace, Justice and the Environment by Ed Brody, Jay Goldspinner, Katie Green, Rona Leventhal, and John Porcino of Stories for World Change Network. Philadelphia, Pa.: New Society Publishers, 1992, 2002. Favorite tales for telling contributed by professional storytellers.

Storytelling for a Greener World: Environment, Community, and Story-based Learning.by Alida Gershie, Anthony Nanson, Edward Schieffelin, Charlene Collison, and Jon Cree. Stroud, England: Hawthorne Press, 2014.

Tales Alive: Bird Tales from Near and Far by Susan Milford. Charlotte, VT: Williamson Publishing, 1998. Six timeless folktales inspired by birds from around the world with hands-on activities.

Tales with Tails: Storytelling the Wonders of the Natural World by Kevin Strauss, Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 2006.

Tales of the Shimmering Sky: Ten Global Folktales with Activities. By Susan Milord. Charlotte, VT: Williamson Publishing, 1996. Investigating the science of the shimmering sky with crafts, cooking, math, games and history.

SINGLE TALES WITH ECOLOGICAL THEMES {for many more tales see collections above}

“Elsie Piddock Skips in Her Sleep” in *Martin Pippin in the Daisy Field* by Eleanor Farjeon (NY: Lippincott, 1937). Elsie skips rope to keep the developers away from the fairy mound.

“The Magic Box” in *The Way of the Storyteller* by Ruth Sawyer (NY: Viking, 1942). Tonio’s father gives him a magic box which causes the farm to thrive, as long as a bit of its grains are shaken onto each corner of the field each day.

“The Man Who Planted Hope and Grew Happiness” by Jean Giono, in *Sharing the Joy of Nature* by Joseph Cornell. (Nevada City, CA: Dawn, 1989. True story of man who spends forty years planting trees.

“Mouse Woman and Porcupine Hunter” in *Mouse Woman and the Mischief Makers* by Christie Harris (NY: Atheneum, 1977). Great Porcupine teachers couple not to overhunt.

“The Strange Folding Screen” in *Men from the Village Deep in the Mountains* by Garrett Bang (NY: Macmillan, 1973). Frogs beg man not to see property to developer.

TO FIND TALES ON NATURE THEMES USE THESE RESOURCES

The Storyteller’s Sourcebook: A Subject, Title, and Motif Index to Folklore Collections for Children by Margaret Read MacDonald. Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 1981. Search for names of animals, birds, plants, moon, stars, etc.

The Storyteller’s Sourcebook: A Subject, Title and Motif Index to Folklore Collections for Children 1983-1999 by Margaret Read MacDonald and Brian Sturm. Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 2001.

FOLKTALE PICTURE BOOKS WITH ECOLOGICAL THEMES

Brave Little Parrot by Rafe Martin. NY: G.P. Putnam 1998. Forest fire.

Give up Gecko: A Folktale from Uganda by Margaret Read MacDonald. NY: Two Lions, 2013. Animals in drought.

Go to Sleep Gecko. A Balinese Folktale. By Margaret Read MacDonald. August House, 2006. Interconnectedness of nature.

The Invisible Hunters: A Legend from the Miskito Indians of Nicaragua/Los Cazadores Invisible: una Leyenda de los Indios Miskitos de Nicaragua. Ed. by Octavio Chow and Morris Vidaure. Trans. by Rosalma Zubizarreta and Alma Flor Ada. Illus. Joe Sam. San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press, 1987,

The People Who Hugged the Trees: An Environmental Folk Tale by Deborah Lee Rose. Illus. Birgitta Saflund. Roberts Rinehart, 1990. Villagers hug trees until ruler agrees to let them stand.

Slop: A Welsh Folktale by Margaret Read MacDonald, illus Yvonne LeBrun Davis. Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 1997. Dealing with garbage.

Surf War: A Folktale from the Marshall Islands by Margaret Read MacDonald, illus Geraldo Valério. Atlanta, GA: August House, 2009. Fight over resources.