

I didn't enjoy, and I literally read the whole 185 pages in one afternoon. This book is everything that Bill has become known for and more. I have yet to be disappointed by Bill Wasserman, and I feel like *It's a Wild Life: Essays from a State Game Warden* has actually upped the game a bit. Whether you are a 25 year veteran conservation officer, an avid or casual outdoors-person, a student, or have just a casual interest in wildlife conservation, this book has something for you. And this is all wrapped up in a very affordable package that is excellent value for your money. From my perspective *It's a Wild Life* is a home run.

*It's a Wild Life: Essays from a State Game Warden* (ISBN 0-9718907-3-0) retails for just \$12.95 USD for the paperback, and \$5.72 for the Kindle edition though Amazon.com. Unfortunately the paperback cannot be ordered from Amazon.ca, but the Kindle edition is available for \$7.47 CAD. I have had success ordering items from the US site and having them shipped to Canada, so apart from the horrid exchange rate, that is an option for Canadian or overseas readers.

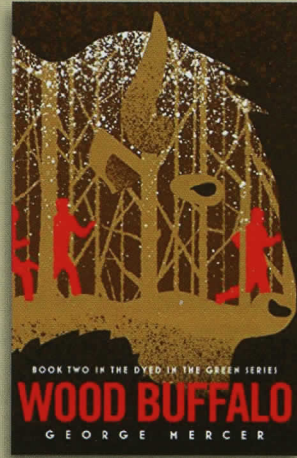
#### EXACTLY ONE YEAR AGO I

reviewed the first novel from retired Canadian National Park Warden **George Mercer** and I gave it high praise. Unfortunately it doesn't appear that my review generated many additional sales of the book, which is really a shame, as it was a terrific first novel. George has a whole series planned that will continue annually until 2020, and the second book is now available, having been published this year. This sophomore entry in the Dyed in the Green Series is titled *Wood Buffalo*, and it picks up where the first one left off. After a tumultuous adventure, and the murder of a fellow warden in Cape Breton, our hero Ben Matthews is transferring to Wood Buffalo National Park which straddles the border of the province of Alberta and the Northwest Territories. It is the second largest national park in the world - larger than Switzerland, and

is now home to some 5000 Wood Bison. At the time that this novel takes place it was the only wolf-bison ecosystem in the world, as the Yellowstone wolf reintroduction had not yet taken place. However, due to tuberculosis and brucellosis outbreaks within the herd, a plan was announced in 1990 to cull the entire herd and restock it with disease-free bison from Elk Island National Park.

This controversial plan forms the backdrop for the novel *Wood Buffalo* which provides a fictional account of the many personal, political, business and self-serving interests that were involved in this issue. Ben Matthews' job as the new Area Warden is to represent Wood Buffalo's best interests which is primarily maintaining the bison and the unique ecosystem as is. Unfortunately the bureaucrats of his agency have other interests, and corruption and self-promotion rear their heads. It appears as though it may be a losing battle at the local level. However, the author has enough useful players waiting in the periphery that Ben isn't going to go down without some support.

*Wood Buffalo* is very much a departure from Mercer's first novel which was primarily about poachers and murder. The author clearly intended to show a different aspect of the function of a Park Warden beyond the protection of the Park's wildlife on a one animal at a time basis. He also briefly touches on some other issues that are of importance and concern in this national park and does so in a way that makes them components of the overall story. This latest book is more of a political thriller, but just like in



the earlier novel, there are some very distasteful and despicable characters that keep the reader on edge and worried for the main characters. And of course there are the requisite personal relationships and love interests. All in all this is a very well written, entertaining and even somewhat educational novel, in which the author has very inventively

oven a story of mystery and intrigue into a true event. I really enjoyed it and I'm hoping that the next novel in the series maintains this high quality. Speaking of the next novel (due out in 2017), several chapters are included at the end, and one of *Wood Buffalo's* most repugnant bad guys makes a reappearance in an influential position. I'm sure this will turn out to be a huge obstacle for poor Ben, who is forced to move on to another park at the end of *Wood Buffalo* due to the political fallout from his "interference" in the bison cull.

*Wood Buffalo* (ISBN 978-0-9879754-2-3) is 332 pages (not including the teaser for *Jasper Wild*) and is available in both a soft-cover trade paperback for \$19.99, and also in eBook format. There are several options for obtaining a copy. It is available through Amazon.com and Amazon.ca, directly from George through <http://georgemercer.com/purchasing/>, or at selected bookstores across Canada, the list of which is also at the link provided. Ebook copies are available from both Amazon and Kobo.

And that about wraps it up for this issue. By the time you read this many of you will be fully engaged in problem wildlife and fall hunting seasons, so be smart and be safe out there. All the best.

GW

If you would like Gerry to review your book, you can contact him at:

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