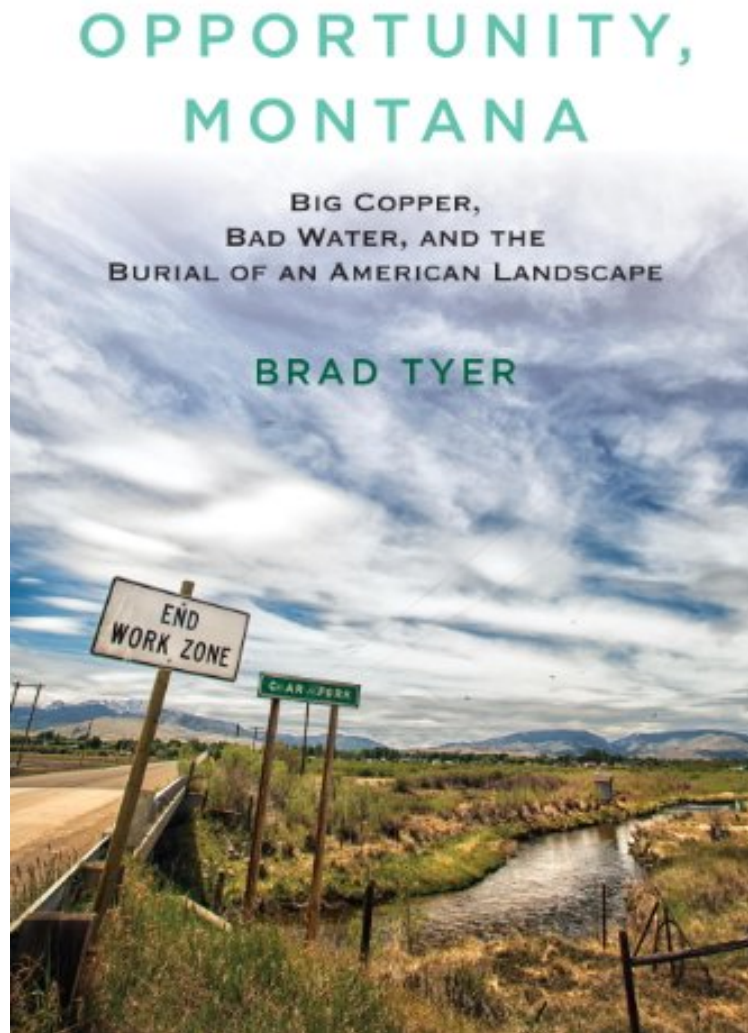


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# Opportunity, Montana: Big Copper, Bad Water, and the Burial of an American Landscape

Brad Tyer

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**Brad Tyer : Opportunity, Montana: Big Copper, Bad Water, and the Burial of an American Landscape** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Opportunity, Montana: Big Copper, Bad Water, and the Burial of an American Landscape:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. if you like canoes, rivers, are concerned about the environment - read this book. By D. B. KANE Civilization is growing at a rapid pace. The cost of this growth is a higher demand for civilization's most important ingredient: copper. Technology is totally dependent on copper - industry, electricity,

everything manufactured - is because of copper. Unfortunately as civilization expands, the demand for copper expands, and the welfare of the environment is jeopardized, because mining copper is toxic. The star of "Opportunity, Montana: Big Copper, Bad Water, And The Burial Of An American Landscape" is a western Montana river named the Clark Fork. The Clark Fork became heavily polluted due to a century of Montana copper mines and smelters. Brad Tyler gives us an excellent history in 19th-20th century copper mining and all of the characters who rose to riches because of those mines. The Clark Fork drained away a lot of the toxic waste of those huge copper mines, and deposited that waste in its bed and banks. Missoula is also on the Clark Fork, where a dam on the river ended up stopping the sediment flow, creating a huge bed of toxic heavy metals, including arsenic. Another "get rich themed" act, in the name of environmental cleanup, it was decided to fix the river's pollution near Missoula. The book's description of how that Superfund cleanup became reality (behind closed doors) - the dealings between politicians and industry - rings of profit motivated truth. Unfortunately for Opportunity, Montana - a small city near the Clark Fork headwaters - that waste had to go some where. The clean-up of Missoula's portion of the Clark Fork went right back where all the waste had been generated. Opportunity is a company town near where all of the copper mines originally produced that waste. The waste was dug out of the river and hauled to Opportunity, where over time, it will slowly leach that waste right back in the river again. Doesn't that sound genius? Cleanup always comes at a cost... Interwoven throughout the book is Brad's difficult relationship with his father. I found this storyline to fit very nicely with all of the environmental concerns laid out. Canoeing, moving from Texas to Montana to pursue a longing of adventures on the rivers of Montana - Brad wove in his life story with the Clark Fork's life story. Reading this book really made me pause and think about what is important in life. There is a lot going on in the world, and all of it is based in greed. Protecting the environment is a noble cause. This book may wake some people up to that cause. Thank you Brad Tyler. This book was well researched and written - this is something to be very proud of. Thank you for reading my review.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very informative, well researched, and well written with a Waldenesque touch. By Mona Howard I was born in Anaconda and spent the first 17 years of my life in Opportunity, I attended the Beaver Dam School and graduated Anaconda High in 1959. My father wore a Copper Collar for 45 + years at the ACM smelter he was an IBEW member and officer. He was an organizer and long time member of the Volunteer Fire Department; both of my parents were active in the Community Club. My mother was an LPN at the State Hospital at Galen that treated respiratory diseases such as silicosis, cancers, and tuberculosis. The Carpenters' Union business agent, referenced in Laurie Mercier's "Anaconda," is my first cousin. I can attest to the veracity of Tyler's assessment of the area; albeit am surprised that he's Texan by birth. Texans who drifted up to Anaconda and Butte during my childhood respected neither the environment nor picket lines. "Oppor" was a truly great place to be a free range kid, we waded, swam, caught fish and frogs in Mill and Willow Creeks, swam and rafted in the "Rock Crusher" that abutted the Country Club, learned balance skills by walking pipe that straddled polluted Silver Bow Creek, the "Yellow River" to us. Tyler makes many reference to the settling ponds; my schoolmates and our parents were less euphemistic; we called them slum ponds. That Opportunity is now a dumping ground for the Clark's toxic sludge is tragic; but no surprise. The ARCO/ BP long abdication of any responsibility for Super Fund site repair is disgusting; but BP's par for the course. Living in Montana taught me contempt for unregulated industries, climate change deniers, and Teapublicans. I've been a resident of Massachusetts since 1965 and resent ultra-conservative thug co-option of the good deeds of the Minutemen. I try to do my small bit toward protecting the environment and supporting human rights. My son, an EMC techno-geek; formerly worked for what is now National Grid. Once, only once; he griped a bit about some union guys under his direction. I reminded him, without labor unions he'd never been born. My parents and grandfathers' union memberships enabled my sisters and me to go to college, and for me to move to Seattle, meet his father at a CORE picket line, and move to Boston. As a high school kid, he was taught that consuming Joe Coors' scab beer was a ticket to Burning Hell.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I loved the book. By sugnim I was required to read this before starting law school. Luckily, I loved the book. It is full of history, culture, and natural history, and it was a pleasure to read.

A memoir-meets-exposeacute; that examines our fraught relationship with the West and our attempts to clean up a toxic environmental legacy. In 2002, Texas journalist Brad Tyler strapped a canoe on his truck and moved to Montana, a state that has long exerted a mythic pull on Americans' imagination as an unspoiled landscape. The son of an engineer who reclaimed wastewater, Tyler was looking for a pristine river to call his own. What he found instead was a century's worth of industrial poison clotting the Clark Fork River, a decades-long engineering project to clean it up, and a forgotten town named Opportunity. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Montana exploited the richest copper deposits in the world, fueling the electric growth of twentieth-century America and building some of the nation's most outlandish fortunes. The toxic by-product of those fortunes—what didn't spill into the river—was dumped in Opportunity. In the twenty-first century, Montana's draw is no longer metal but landscape: the blue-ribbon trout streams and unspoiled wilderness of the nation's last best place. To match reality to the myth, affluent exurbanites and well-meaning environmentalists are trying to restore the Clark Fork River to its natural state. In the process, millions of tons of toxic soils are

being removed and dumped—once again—in Opportunity. As Tyer investigates Opportunity's history, he wrestles with questions of environmental justice and the ethics of burdening one community with an entire region's waste. Stalled at the intersection of a fading extractive economy and a fledgling restoration boom, Opportunity's story is a secret history of the American Dream and a key to understanding the country—and increasingly the globe's—demand for modern convenience. As Tyer explores the degradations of the landscape, he also probes the parallel emotional geography of familial estrangement. Part personal history and part reportorial narrative, Opportunity, Montana is a story of progress and its price: of copper and water, of father and son, and of our attempts to redeem the mistakes of the past. From the Hardcover edition.