

✖ "...it's not even past." — William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*.

After its [excellent special issue on "Oil in American History,"](#) the *Journal of American History* has done it again. Its new issue includes [a State Of The Field Symposium on American Environmental History](#), with an interpretive essay by the University of Georgia's Paul S. Sutter, with comments from leading scholars in the field.

The World with Us: The State of American Environmental History

✖ Since the *Journal of American History* last published a round table on the subject in 1990, American environmental history has seen explosive growth. Paul S. Sutter takes us on a selective tour of this expansive field, paying particular attention to questions of environmental causation and the ways environmental historians have replaced the once-firm categories of nature and culture with various approaches to environmental hybridity. That hybrid turn, Sutter suggests, has been analytically essential, yet it has also left the field at a moral crossroads. Following Sutter's essay David Igler, Christof Mauch, Gregg Mitman, Linda Nash, Helen M. Rozwadowski, and Bron Taylor offer critical responses.

It's not clear to me that "hybridity" can do quite as much work as Sutter says: the idea that culture and nature are fluid categories seems to me rather obvious. But it will be interesting and useful to see what he and the commentators do with it.

In any event, like most of what is in *JAH*, this is well worth reading, and the *Journal* has made [all the articles free on its website](#). Great weekend reading!