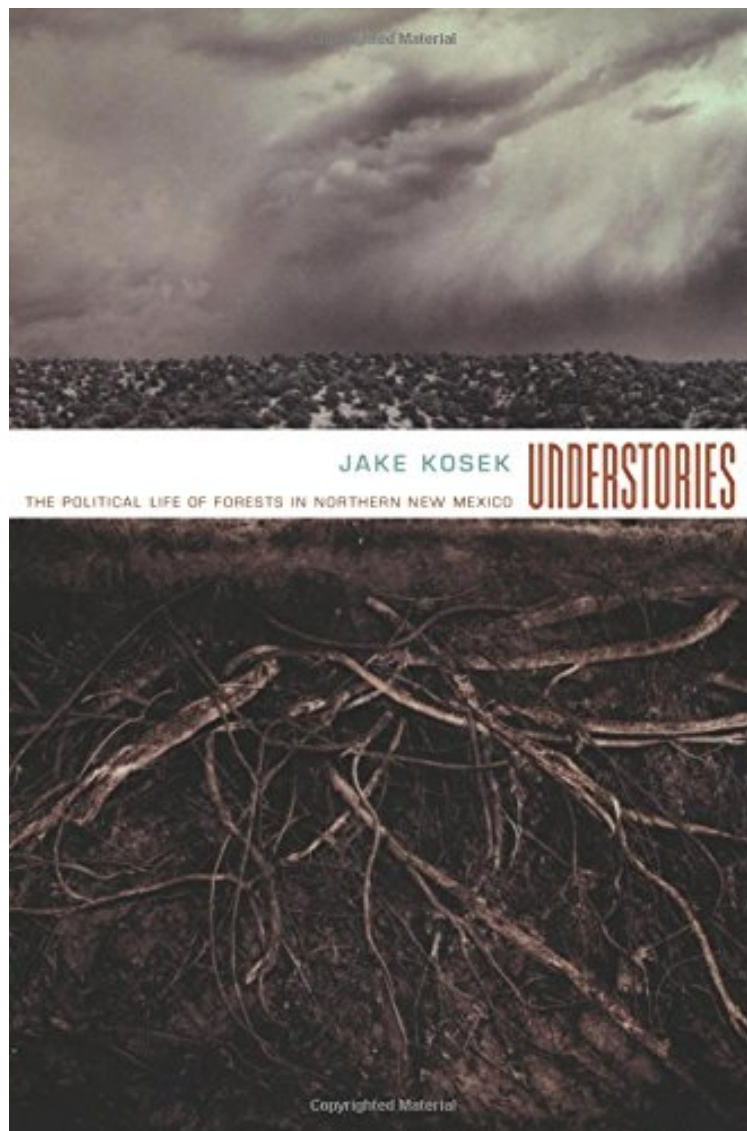


(Free download) Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico (a John Hope Franklin Center Book)

## Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico (a John Hope Franklin Center Book)

*Jake Kosek*

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#751688 in Books 2006-12-08 2006-12-08Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.25 x 1.01 x 6.13l, 1.27 #File Name: 0822338475408 pages | File size: 31.Mb

**Jake Kosek : Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico (a John Hope Franklin Center Book)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico (a John Hope Franklin Center Book):

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. AmazingBy Sara SalemI absolutely loved this book. Kosek does so

well to show how complicated questions of land, the nation state, race and economics are intertwined. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Asks tough and important questions

**By Gabriel Piser**  
*Understories* does a great job navigating the complex relationships at work producing the social political and ecological worlds in Northern New Mexico. The author asks very tough questions about the connections between racism, nationalism, and environmentalism. He highlights the interplay between indigenous and settler histories with larger structures of land (and people) management. He investigates the ongoing presence of racism in the management systems of the Forest Service, and the larger systems of control which are grounded in troubling forms of nationalism which use the notion of an all-encompassing 'we' (public land) to cover over the specific land-use needs of Hispano communities, who have been impoverished through a series of exploitative land-tenure reorganizations.

**Kosek** weaves history, ecology, political economy, and race criticism, in a powerful text of political ecology. People interested in ecology or politics should absolutely read this book, in order to understand how well-intentioned environmental activists can dramatically and persistently undermine political struggles for autonomy.

19 of 20 people found the following review helpful. What Lies Underneath

**By Kay Matthews**  
In a narrative that is both theoretically informative and passionately engaging, Jake Kosek brilliantly analyzes the politics of race and nature that underlie the intense conflicts that erupted over forest management in northern New Mexico. His devastating critique of the politics of the environmental movement reveals its legacy of purity based on exclusion, nation, and race. Expanding upon that critique, he analyzes how the Forest Service established and exercised its powers of governance to exploit forest resources and the members of the traditional communities that are dependent upon them. Kosek concludes his analysis by taking a close look at the role Los Alamos National Laboratory plays in this drama: reinforcing economic and social disparities and completely transforming the way people understand nature by irradiating it. This book challenges conventional understandings of nature and governance and should be read by everyone concerned about issues of environmental and social justice.

Through lively, engaging narrative, *Understories* demonstrates how volatile politics of race, class, and nation animate the notoriously violent struggles over forests in the southwestern United States. Rather than reproduce traditional understandings of nature and environment, Jake Kosek shifts the focus toward material and symbolic “natures,” seemingly unchangeable essences central to formations of race, class, and nation that are being remade not just through conflicts over resources but also through everyday practices by Chicano activists, white environmentalists, and state officials as well as nuclear scientists, heroin addicts, and health workers. Drawing on two years of ethnographic fieldwork and extensive archival research, he shows how these contentious natures are integral both to environmental politics and the formation of racialized citizens, politicized landscapes, and modern regimes of rule. Kosek traces the histories of forest extraction and labor exploitation in northern New Mexico, where Hispano residents have forged passionate attachments to place. He describes how their sentiments of dispossession emerged through land tenure systems and federal management programs that remade forest landscapes as exclusionary sites of national and racial purity. Fusing fine-grained ethnography with insights gleaned from cultural studies and science studies, Kosek shows how the nationally beloved Smokey the Bear became a symbol of white racist colonialism for many Hispanos in the region, while Los Alamos National Laboratory, at once revered and reviled, remade regional ecologies and economies. *Understories* offers an innovative vision of environmental politics, one that challenges scholars as well as activists to radically rework their understandings of relations between nature, justice, and identity.

“*Understories* is a critically important book. Jake Kosek’s arguments are original, necessary, and rarely heard; his deep tying together of race and nature is almost entirely absent from the current scholarly literature.”—Hugh Raffles, author of *In ia: A Natural History*