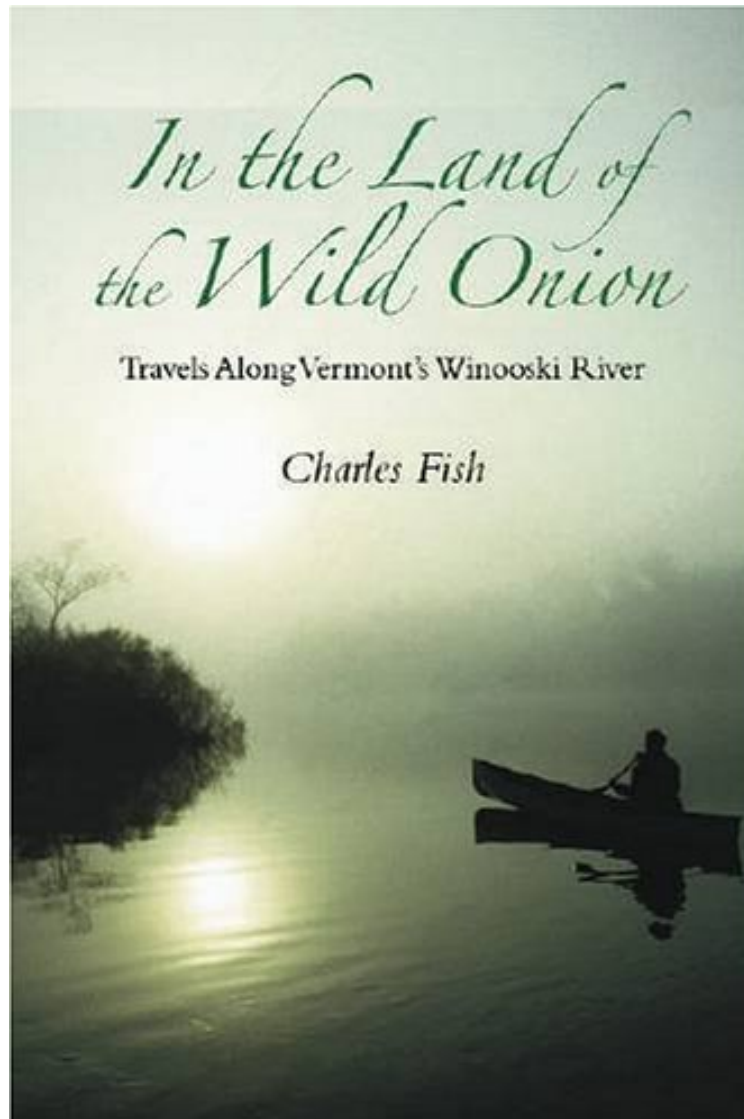


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In the Land of the Wild Onion: Travels Along Vermont's Winooski River

Charles Fish

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Charles Fish : In the Land of the Wild Onion: Travels Along Vermont's Winooski River before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In the Land of the Wild Onion: Travels Along Vermont's Winooski River:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An interesting read for the first half, especially if ...By Howard FitzpatrickAn interesting read for the first half, especially if you're familiar with the headwaters area as I am. The

second half gets into lots of downriver digressions that hold less interest for the naturalist. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Travels along Vermont's Winooski River By Russell Fanelli In *The Land of the Wild Onion* by Charles Fish is one of those rare and special books that educate and entertain us at the same time. It is filled with the same kind of wit and wisdom we find when we read Thoreau, and this comparison of Fish to Thoreau is apt. Both writers are great scholars, but good friends to us. They never talk down to us, but always educate us. When we put down their books we feel incomparably better for having shared their company. It would be better to talk with them in person sitting on a rocky outcrop overlooking Walden Pond or the Winooski River, but reading their books is an experience that can be repeated again and again, with notes taken, and thoughts tucked away for reflective observation. In *The Land of the Wild Onion* we meet trappers and hunters, fishers and farmers, friends and neighbors - all Vermonters and all with a story to tell. Fish brings them to life so truly and lovingly that we come to know and like them almost as much as he does. His book is not a novel - far from it - but Fish writes so well that we forget we are reading a history of Vermont's Winooski River and get lost in the story of some of the people he meets in his adventure canoeing and portaging down the river from its source to Lake Champlain. It is a leisurely journey with plenty of time to discuss the origins of the river, land, animals, and people. A Vermonter reading this book will respond with pride because Fish loves his state and shows why it is such a special place. The rest of us will want to head to Vermont for a long visit, perhaps in the fall when the trees and mountains that fill the state are in their autumn glory. Then, as Fish suggests, we can leave our troubles behind and take a deep breath as we attend to the beauty revealed in nature that is missing from so much of our busy lives. Fish tells us: "In its own meandering way, my book has been an attempt to attend." More than this, "We are the caretakers of the planet; we must attend. It is our fate." *In the Land of the Wild Onion* is a book once read not soon forgotten. Highly recommended.

Charles Fish, author of *In Good Hands: The Keeping of a Family Farm* and *Blue Ribbons and Burlesque: A Book of Country Fairs*, sets off on a journey down Vermont's Winooski River, from the headwaters in Cabot to river's end at Lake Champlain, in order to rediscover the river valley of his youth and to consider the power of place in all our lives. Recounting travels by foot, car, and canoe (which Fish christens "The Tub"), *In the Land of the Wild Onion* offers engaging and often humorous tales of adventures along the river, of impenetrable thickets and backbreaking portages, of battles with a recalcitrant canoe, of nights camping out among the mosquitoes. The people Fish meets along the way spur discussions of geology, hydropower, hunting, fishing, farming, and tracking, to name a few. The chronicle of his journey is both a reminiscence of days spent living along the Winooski and a clear-eyed, deeply informative, and fascinating look at the changes and challenges to the habitat and resources of a river valley. What emerges is a portrait of the lives and rhythms of the valley, a rich and rewarding insight into how the land forms us and how we, its stewards, care for the land. Anyone with an interest in nature writing or local and regional resource management will profit from this well-told tale of one of Vermont's great rivers.

"Fish is an entertaining raconteur with a great story to tell and deep enthusiasm for relating it."--*Vermont Life* "In the Land of the Wild Onion is an important chronicle . . . Those of us made happy by bibliographies will come away satisfied, and those of us who want to be cradled in the arms of a trustworthy author will have no complaints either. This publication does not allow its reviewers to assign stars; if it did, this book would get the maximum allotment."--*Vermont History* "A substantial number of river and river-basin 'biographies' have been published over the years, including a number specifically relevant to Vermont . . . But none is as erudite, informative, and gracefully written as this one. The author's contribution is clearly in the tradition of Claudio Magris's 1989 river basic classic, *Danube*. To stress once again, what the author captures so magnificently is the complexity and importance of the inescapable interactions between human actions and the natural world--an achievement that suggests to me that this book should be read, enjoyed, and digested by college students and other scholars of ecology, geography, and environmental conservation far beyond the borders of Vermont and New England."--*Northern Woodlands* "[Fish] succeeds in helping us to see the Vermont landscape both more clearly and more accurately. By doing so, we also become aware of how our own behavior affects the landscape. It is easy to think that landscape is just a backdrop for human exploitation. Reading *In the Land of the Wild Onion*, however, teaches us just how much thinking that way has allowed us to degrade our environment, and how changing our thinking, changing our behavior, using our scientific knowledge and our human compassion for nature, we can heal the landscape, and ourselves."--*Brattleboro Reformer (VT)* "In the land of the Wild Onion Charles Fish does for rivers what his earlier *In Good Hands* did for the family farm: blend personal experience, Yankee thoroughness and a magnificent talent for understanding human enterprise to produce a wholeness that feeds the mind and soothes the heart. Charles Fish is for Vermont what E.B. White was for Maine and Wendell Berry is for Kentucky -- a superb regional writer with a universal message." About the Author CHARLES FISH, a native Vermonter and retired professor of English, lives in Dummerston, Vermont, with his wife Eleanor. This is his third book.