

**Richard Walker, author of “The Country in the City: The Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area”**

**Thursday, February 7 at 7:30 p.m.**

**Marin Art and Garden Center, 30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Ross, CA**

**Jointly sponsored by Marin Master Gardeners and Environmental Forum of Marin**

Richard Walker, professor of economic geography at UC Berkeley, will highlight the grassroots efforts and local heroes responsible for preserving so much of the Bay Area’s open space.

His book, “The Country in the City,” published this summer by the University of Washington Press, details the hard-fought battles that gave the Bay Area the most extensive greenbelt of any metropolitan region in the country. Almost 900,000 acres are in publicly owned open space, an area larger than Yosemite National Park.

The heroes of these preservation battles include not only men such as John Muir, William Kent and David Brower, but also powerful women: Laura Lyon White, Caroline Livermore, Helen van Pelt, Sylvia McLaughlin and Dorothy Ward Erskine.

In an interview with the San Francisco Chronicle (published July 19, 2007), Professor Walker said, “One lesson the Bay Area environmental history has taught us is that you have to fight like the devil, not one of those successes ever arrived on a silver platter. I still feel optimistic. But we can’t just congratulate ourselves on being ahead of the curve, then sit on our laurels around the Bay Area. The fight has to be carried outward, into the Central Valley and beyond. Otherwise, we’re going to end up with just one big city between San Francisco and Yosemite.”

Professor Walker’s earlier books include “The Conquest of Bread: 150 Years of Agribusiness in California” (2004) and “The Capitalist Imperative: Territory, Technology and Industrial Growth (1989). He has authored articles on the New Economy in the Bay Area, industrial decentralization, globalization, and many other topics related to Bay Area growth.

# University of Washington Press

## *Book News*

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### *The Country in the City*

**Richard A. Walker**

*Foreword by William Cronon*

Publication date: May 2007

The San Francisco Bay Area is one of the world's most beautiful cities. Despite a population of 7 million people, it is more greensward than asphalt jungle, more open space than hardscape. In *The Country in the City*, Richard Walker tells the story of how the jigsaw geography of this greenbelt has been set into place.

The Bay Area's civic landscape has been fought over acre by acre, an arduous process requiring popular mobilization, political will, and hard work. Its most cherished environments have engendered some of the fiercest environmental battles in the country and have made the region a leader in green ideas and organizations.

This book tells how the Bay Area got its green grove: from the stirrings of conservation to origins of the recreational parks and coastal preserves in the early twentieth century, from the fight to stop bay fill and control suburban growth after the Second World War to securing conservation easements and stopping toxic pollution in our times. Here, modern environmentalism first became a mass political movement in the 1960s, with the sudden blooming of the Sierra Club and Save the Bay, and it remains a global center of environmentalism to this day. Green values have been a pillar of Bay Area life and politics for more than a century. It is an environmentalism grounded in local places and personal concerns, close to the heart of the city. Yet this vision of what a city should be has always been informed by liberal, even utopian, ideas of nature, government, and democracy.

Written in a lively and accessible style, *The Country in the City* will be of interest to general readers and environmental activists. At the same time, it speaks to fundamental debates in environmental history, urban planning, and geography.

**Richard Walker** is professor of geography and chair of the California Studies Center at the University of California, Berkeley.

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