

Save the Date:

A lecture recording will be delivered via email on **Monday, October 12** to be viewed at your convenience.

Lecture:

Erosion: Essays of Undoing

Presented through CMU's sponsorship of [Pittsburgh Arts and Lectures' Ten Evenings](#)

Williams will discuss her collection of essays titled *Erosion* in which she sizes up the continuing assaults on America's public lands and the erosion of our commitment to the open space of democracy. These essays are Williams' call to action for blazing a way forward through difficult and dispiriting times. Our undoing is also our becoming.

TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS

*Writer-In-Residence,
Harvard Divinity School*

Author Educator Conservationist Activist



“By honoring wilderness, we honor beauty. Beauty is not peripheral, but at the core of what sustains us. Awe and wonder ignite our imagination.”

— Terry Tempest Williams

Terry Tempest Williams is an award-winning author, educator, conservationist and activist. She received a bachelor's degree in English with a minor in biology from the University of Utah in 1978, followed by a master's degree in environmental education in 1984. In 2003, she co-founded the University of Utah's master's program in environmental humanities, where she taught for 13 years as the Annie Clark Tanner Teaching Fellow. She has worked with the Planetary Health Alliance and Center for the Study of World Religions in establishing the [Constellation Project](#), which explores the relationships between humanity, the natural world and our fellow cohabitants. Currently, Williams is writer-in-residence at the Harvard Divinity School.

Williams' writing is rooted in the American West, drawing inspiration from the arid landscape of Utah and its Mormon culture, social and environmental justice and more. Described as a “citizen writer,” her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Orion Magazine*, and numerous anthologies worldwide as a crucial voice for ecological consciousness and social change. In 2019, she was elected as a member into the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

ACTIVISM THROUGH AUTHORSHIP

As an activist, Williams advocates for justice by drawing parallels between environmental and social issues. Her widely anthologized essay *The Clan of One-Breasted Women* from her 1991 memoir [Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place](#) explores the negative relationship between nuclear testing and public health. In 1995 amid ongoing debate over the fate of Utah's public lands, she partnered with fellow writer and conservationist Stephen Trimble to edit a collection titled [Testimony: Writers Speak on Behalf of Utah Wilderness](#) which was provided to Congress in an effort to sway public policy. As described in this [Weber Studies interview](#), President Clinton held up a copy and said “This made a difference” during the 1996 dedication of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, a two million acre area of Utah wildlands that was placed under federal protection.

EROSION: ESSAYS OF UNDOING

Described as “haunting, powerful and brave” by the [New York Times Book Review](#), Williams' *Erosion* (2019) explores the “erosional landscape” that characterizes much of our society and culture. In this [2020 Sierra interview](#), she frames the current political landscape as inspiration for her work.

