*Fraccidental Death* combines fast-paced crime drama with well-researched environmental issues

*Reviewed by Pat Spears*

*Fraccidental Death*, the second in Donna Meredith’s *Water Warriors* series, is part murder mystery and part cautionary tale about the country’s insatiable appetite for cheap fossil fuel, with keen observations about broken relationships adding complexity to the narrative.

Fans of the first *Water Warriors* book, *Wet Work*, will have met the novel’s wounded but strong and appealing protagonist, Summer Cassidy. Here, Summer is still a student of hydrogeology, now pursuing her PhD at Penn State. For her doctoral project, she plans a study of groundwater before, during, and after hydraulic fracturing – fracking – operations in West Virginia. However, as she soon learns, such a project is much easier said than done.

The obstacles standing between Summer and completion of her project include two brothers at war with each other over allowing drilling on their ancestral land, a truck driver who falls victim to a chemical spill, and an oil company executive who is willing to do anything to reverse his dire financial situation.

Further complicating Summer’s plans is the reappearance of environmentalist Ty Franceschi, with whom Summer enjoyed a brief romance while the two were in Florida. Ty seems no longer interested in pursuing their relationship but is focused on stopping all fracking operations in West Virginia. As his struggle intensifies, Summer learns, much to her dismay, that Ty has greatly expanded his ideas of what sort of tactics are allowable in his mission to stop the oil companies.

Through a series of plot twists, Summer discovers just how far brothers, neighbors, friends,and enemies will go to get what they want. In the process she also learns what she must do to either mend broken relationships or let them go.

Meredith has succeeded in making this a fascinating read by combining a fast-paced crime drama with well-researched, detailed information about one of the biggest environmental challenges facing us today. She has given an accurate and timely look at issues confronting us in Florida and elsewhere around the country as we debate the question of allowing hydraulic fracturing in our communities. If you enjoy a good mystery with carefully developed characters and a social conscience, this is your book.