

Embracing the Earth's Wild Resources

A Global Conservation Vision

by Eugène Lapointe

Book Review

by Janice Henke, Anthropologist

This is a stunningly frank book. It illuminates the present state of international conservation beliefs and practices, and highlights the ways in which political decisions affect the health of the environment. Eugene Lapointe chronicles the processes that have weakened the missions of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, and of CITES. He is eminently qualified to present strong opinions: his nine years as Secretary General of CITES, and his personal observations of the international conservation process since that time, have convinced him that the legal and scientific concepts of conservation have been perverted and misapplied until the two conventions now serve ends entirely unlike those intended by the framers. Eugene Lapointe wants the world to know what has gone wrong, and exactly how and why the spirit of conservation has been betrayed. The book also outlines his vision for a future in which local communities are in charge of their own resources, as they practice conservation through sustainable use.

Embracing the Earth's Wild Resources has something for everyone who cares about wildlife and wild places. The first few chapters clearly outline the diverse and complex meanings of conservation, and discuss the philosophical differences between science based and humane conservation concerns, and the self-serving, vested interests of those who oppose the use of natural resources for any reason. The treaties that were meant to carry out conservation in the original sense of the word, are explained as global tools for that end. Those organizations that are dedicated to obstructing them are identified and their historic actions are spelled out in no uncertain terms. Myths, legends, crimes at sea, bogus surveys, deceit, waste, dirty politics, economic blackmail and media manipulation are all chronicled by one who has watched the process in action.

Eugene Lapointe has seen international conservation portrayed by mass media as a blame game, causing the general public in most western nations to have a badly skewed perspective about the legitimate roles of governments vs protectionist NGOs. He notes that in some cases, blatant racism has been a factor in development of national policies on international conservation issues. Racism and intolerance of other cultures, in conjunction with the efforts of organizations such as Greenpeace, IFAW, Humane Society of the United States, PETA, and others, have resulted in violation both of human rights and of the sovereign rights of Parties to CITES and IWC. "Environmentalist" and animal rights organizations have not served to advance conservation, either in principle or in practice.

Eugene Lapointe's global vision combines the modern concept of stewardship of natural resources with respect for human rights, and a return to mutual respect among nations. This is his hope for the future of the earth and its people, and their natural resources. Embracing the Earth's Wild Resources is itself, a respectful call for a return to decent relations among nations, and for weakening of those forces that have diminished both good will among men, and the scientific principles of international wildlife conservation. This book will soon be recognized for its honest portrayal of the historically unique transnational NGO political process, and its impact on both science and human rights.

Embracing the Earth's Wild Resources may be ordered on-line at www.iwmc.org. It is available immediately.