

Wilderness and the Changing American West

Gundars Rudzitis



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"an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." -- 1964 Wilderness Act

In this thoughtful assessment of wilderness management policy and practice, geographer Gundars Rudzitis explores the ongoing conflicts over the protection/exploitation of our western wilderness areas. He separates the romantic myth of the Wild West from past and present realities, and considers the influence of the traditional self-image of the Westerner on wilderness management policy. Rudzitis also explores the role of Native Americans and what their traditions can teach us about wilderness management.

While clearly on the side of preservation--he rails against the practice of placing wilderness areas in the care of government agencies that also promote the interests of the corporate resource industries--Professor Rudzitis approaches the subject with a scientist's devotion to the facts. He assesses crucial issues evenhandedly and offers honest appraisals of new and emerging land management trends, including ecosystem management and the privatization of public lands. He calls for the dramatic and controversial changes necessary to protect our wilderness heritage.

Wilderness and the Changing American West is essential reading for public policymakers; land management, wildlife, park and recreation, and economic development officials; environmentalists; and everyone interested in the preservation and/or use of this precious national treasure.

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