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Electronic Green Journal

Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3k71k99z>

Journal

Electronic Green Journal, 1(26)

ISSN

1076-7975

Author

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Publication Date

2008-04-01

Peer reviewed

Electronic Green Journal

Review: *Millipedes and Moon Tigers: Science and Policy in an Age of Extinction*

By Steve Nash

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Steve Nash. *Millipedes and Moon Tigers: Science and Policy in an Age of Extinction*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007. xii, 166 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8139-2623-0 (cloth); US\$22.95. Printed on acid free paper.

The book is composed of seventeen essays presenting urgent messages through the work of field scientists about their discoveries in the causes and consequences of ecological changes to habitats and populations. Nash, Associate Professor of Journalism at the University of Richmond, covers a wide range of topics--for example, endangered and extinct species, plant and animal cloning, cold storage of genes, and the promises and problems of genetics. Also discussed are government policies that help and hinder the efforts to preserve habitats and species.

The title is taken from two of the numerous species examined. First is the Laurel Creek millipede, which has been around for 2 to 3 million years, but now exists in just one known small population. The second named title species is from the work of Betsy Dresser, researcher in the area of future technologies designed to save endangered species, who has a forthcoming book, *Tigers to the Moon*, which presents the recreation of life on other planets.

Nash effectively injects select comments from the field scientists into his essays that heighten the overall message of the book. An example is archaeobotanist, Naomi Miller's "It's much easier to maintain the ecosystem than to repair it," (p. 26), and insect ecologist Kenneth Raffa's "...when you transfer a technology from closed, controlled conditions to open complex systems, there are almost always unforeseen parameters that affect system behavior" (p. 131).

Woven through the essays are examples of government policies and programs that have both helped and hindered the environment. There is occasionally a strong anti-government bias: "The intent of these [White House] editorial changes falsified reports by creating an exaggerated sense of scientific uncertainty about global warming" (p. 7). Not all is negative reporting. For example, the Meadowview Project is creating blight resistant genes into chestnut trees in an attempt to reclaim the loss of 3.5 billion trees in the Northeast lost over 100 plus years. Nash even presents a unique twist in saving habitat that is underway in the efforts to save Civil War battle sites. The archaeological data that these sites hold tell a much truer story of the past than can be gained by other means.

This brief, though somewhat random, examples of scientific efforts to protect the environment, from saving song bird populations to preventing the purposeful introduction of invasive species into our ecosystems, do not claim to be comprehensive. Also, there

are no strong conclusions or “what we should do now” statements. An interesting read recommended for general science and environmental studies collections.

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