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## **Review by Irwin Weintraub <weintraub@zodiac.rutgers.edu>**

**Agriculture Resource Librarian, Library of Science and Medicine, Rutgers University, P.O. Box 1029, Piscataway, NJ 08855-1029. USA. TEL: 908-445-3526.**

DEFINING SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY. Edited by Gregory H. Aplet, Nels Johnson, Jeffrey T. Olson, and V. Alaric Sample. Foreword by Edward O. Wilson. Washington, DC, Island Press, 1993. 328 pp. US\$49.95 cloth ISBN: 1-55963-233-X. US\$24.95 paper ISBN: 1-55963-234-8. Recycled, acid free paper.

The forests of North America constitute a fragile, symbiotic ecosystem, nurtured by an abundance of plants, animals, water, and other natural resources. For some, the main purpose of the forest is to produce marketable products such as wood and paper. Others view the forests as a recreational setting for camping, hiking and enjoyment of nature. Scientists study forest ecosystems to attain a greater understanding of the forces of nature and their natural processes. In order to satisfy the needs of those who look to the forests for livelihoods or enjoyment, it is critical to manage and maintain our forests with programs and policies that promote sustainability and wise use.

DEFINING SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY grapples with the definition of sustainable forestry and the lack of consensus about the components of a sustainable ecosystem. The book is arranged in three parts consisting of papers by experts from academia, industry, and government who present their perspectives on sustainable forest management.

Part I, examines issues of forest management in a holistic setting. The authors attempt to define sustainable forestry and stress ecosystem sustainability in which all species in the biologically complex forests can thrive. They challenge us to better understand the relationships among people, forest resources, and ecosystem complexity. There is agreement that sustainable systems must be ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially desirable. Forest management programs which include these criteria are taking the right approach to assuring that our forests will be preserved for current and future generations. Nevertheless, ideas about how to achieve sustainability vary widely.

Part II offers regional approaches to designing sustainable forest ecosystems. Comprehensive programs of regional forest management are presented which best suit the needs of the pacific northwest; northern hardwood and conifer region; southeastern United States; central hardwood region, and the inland west. John C. Gordon, in the final paper in this section, succinctly summarizes the regional approaches with five simple rules: 1. manage locally; 2. include human influence; 3. define system boundaries and move them when necessary; 4. know your system and the mechanisms that operate in that environment, and 5. include all components of the system when making decisions.

In Part 3, the authors remind readers that social, political, economic, ecological and aesthetic considerations impinge upon forest use. Quality forest management must involve the proper balance among human needs and all the fauna and flora that rely on forest ecosystems for sustenance. If forests are to be maintained for future generations, planners cannot separate the values and ethics of forest management from other components. This holistic framework will prove to be the most desirable way to establish sustainable forestry in North America.

There is consensus among the authors that sustainable management practices are vital for preservation of forests and their fragile ecosystems. The unique characteristic about DEFINING SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY is the ability of the editors to bring together the wide variety of viewpoints and conceptions about how to achieve sustainability.

This book is required reading for forest aficionados everywhere.