



Cities in the Wilderness: A New Vision of Land Use in America

Bruce Babbitt

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In this brilliant, gracefully written, and important new book, former Secretary of the Interior and Governor of Arizona Bruce Babbitt brings fresh thought--and fresh air--to questions of how we can build a future we want to live in.

We've all experienced America's changing natural landscape as the integrity of our forests, seacoasts, and river valleys succumbs to strip malls, new roads, and subdivisions. Too often, we assume that when land is developed it is forever lost to the natural world--or hope that a patchwork of local conservation strategies can somehow hold up against further large-scale development.

In *Cities in the Wilderness*, Bruce Babbitt makes the case for why we need a national vision of land use. We may have a space program, he points out, but here at home we don't have an open-space policy that can balance the needs for human settlement and community with those for preservation of the natural world upon which life depends. Yet such a balance, the author demonstrates, is as remarkably achievable as it is necessary. This is no call for developing a new federal bureaucracy; Babbitt shows instead how much can be--and has been--done by making thoughtful and beneficial use of laws and institutions already in place.

A hallmark of the book is the author's ability to match imaginative vision with practical understanding. Babbitt draws on his extensive experience to take us behind the scenes negotiating the Florida Everglades restoration project, the largest ever authorized by Congress. In California, we discover how the Endangered Species Act, still one of the most effective laws governing land use, has been employed to restore regional habitat. In the Midwest, we see how new World Trade Organization regulations might be used to help restore Iowa's farmlands and rivers. As a key architect of many environmental success stories, Babbitt reveals how broad restoration projects have thrived through federal- state partnership and how their principles can be extended to other parts of the country.

Whether writing of land use as reflected in the Gettysburg battlefield, the movie Chinatown, or in presidential political strategy, Babbitt gives us fresh insight. In this inspiring and informative book, Babbitt sets his lens to panoramic--and offers a vision of land use as grand as the country's natural heritage.

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