



The Rain Forests of Home: Profile Of A North American Bioregion

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Stretching from the redwoods of California to the vast stands of spruce and hemlock in southeast Alaska, coastal temperate rain forests have been for thousands of years home to one of the highest densities of human settlements on the continent. Given its mild climate, magnificent scenery, and abundant natural resources, the region should continue to support robust economies and vibrant communities for many years to come. However, the well-being of this region is increasingly threatened by diminishing natural capital, declining employment in traditional resource-based industries, and outward migration of young people to cities. "The Rain Forests of Home" brings together a diverse array of thinkers -- conservationists, community organizers, botanists, anthropologists, zoologists, Native Americans, ecologists, and others -- to present a multilayered, multidimensional portrait of the coastal temperate rain forest and its people. Joining natural and social science perspectives, the book provides readers with a valuable understanding of the region's natural and human history, along with a vision of its future and strategies for realizing that vision. Authors describe the physical setting and examine the geographic and evolutionary forces that have shaped the region since the last glacial period, with individual chapters covering oceanography, climate, geologic processes, vegetation, fauna, streams and rivers, and terrestrial/marine interactions. Three chapters cover the history of human habitation, including an examination of what is known about pre-European settlement, a consideration of the traditions of local and indigenous knowledge, and a description of the environmental and cultural upheaval brought by European explorers and settlers. The book concludes with an exploration of recent economic and cultural trends, regional and local public policy, information gathering, and the need for integrating local knowledge into decision making. Interspersed among the chapters are compelling profiles of community-level initiatives and programs aimed at restoring damaged ecosystems, promoting sustainable use of resources, and fostering community-based economic development. The case studies describe what coastal residents are doing to combine environmental conservation with socioeconomic development, and document some of the most innovative experiments in sustainable development now underway in North America. "The Rain Forests of Home" offers for the first time a unified description of the characteristics, history, culture, economy, and ecology of the coastal temperate rain forest. It is essential reading for anyone who lives in or cares about the region.

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Rosalyn Kendall:

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