



The Next West: Public Lands, Community, and Economy in the American West

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In *The Next West*, nearly a dozen leading thinkers and writers offer an insightful vision of the future of the American West. Their essays comprise a cogent matrix of reflections on what has gone wrong in the region, and, as Donald Snow explains in his lively introduction, point the way to a Next West based on "the renewal of Jeffersonian democracy, experiments in local and supra-local control of public lands, and the use of markets to replace the political allocation of natural resources." The first half of the book presents an enlightening view of what it is to live in the West and practice environmental awareness. From the Sangre de Cristo Range, to the forests of the Pacific Northwest, to a single valley in Wyoming, the contributors describe their experiences with environmental endeavors ranging from the birth of the recycling industry on the streets of Seattle to the leasing of federal coal. In the second half of the book, contributors address the mythologies that have set the tone for life in the West for more than a century, challenging "the demons that command center stage in the politics and economy of the region." They dissect and debunk much of the West's gospel: that environmentally damaging extractive industries are essential for economic survival; that conservation is best handled by the government; that some day soon a great leader will arrive to once and for all solve their most pressing problems.

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