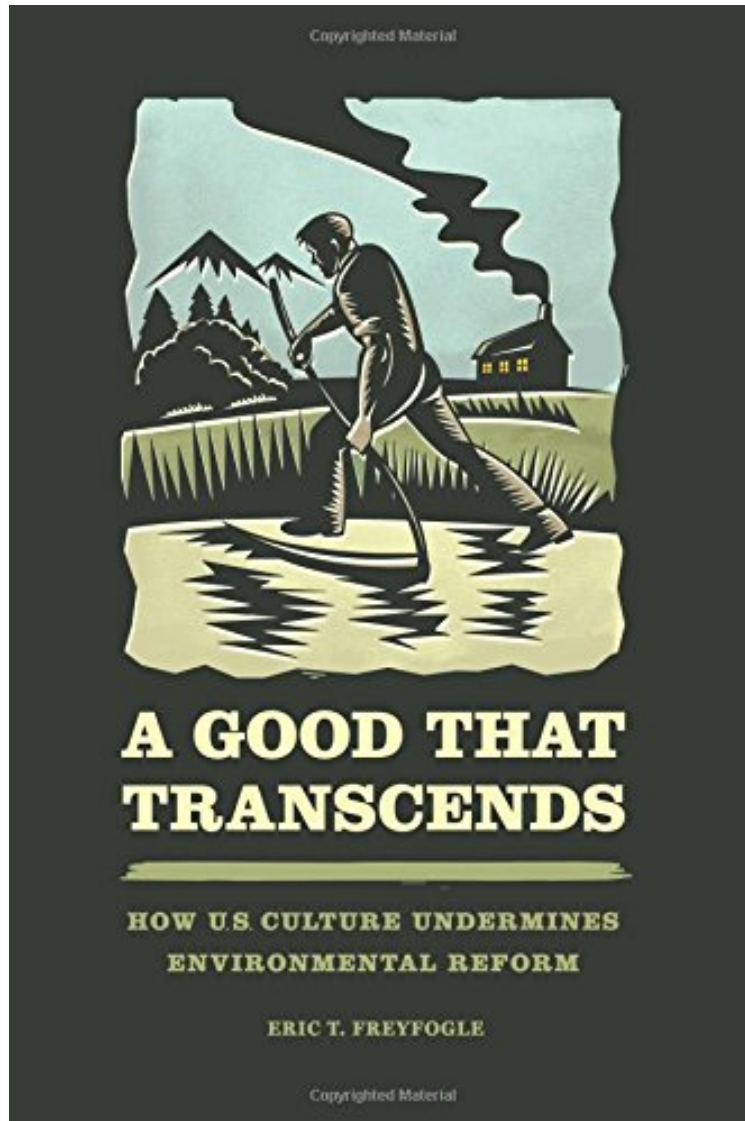


A Good That Transcends: How US Culture Undermines Environmental Reform

Eric T. Freyfogle

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Eric T. Freyfogle : A Good That Transcends: How US Culture Undermines Environmental Reform before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Good That Transcends: How US Culture Undermines Environmental Reform:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not to be MissedBy NickThis book, written by Professor Eric

Freyfogle, is a powerful addition to modern environmental literature. Professor Freyfogle, an expert in environmental philosophy, property law, natural resources law, and environmental law (among others) brings his critical eye to bear on the vast body of environmental thought, and the result is unique for its breadth and critical depth. It is informally divided into two parts. The first considers four important environmental thinkers in order to begin the wildly underappreciated task of unifying environmental thought. They include Aldo Leopold, Wendell Berry, David Orr, and Pope Francis. Professor Freyfogle uses these writers as both stepping stones and foils to ably lead the reader through the complex field of environmental thought. He shows that these important figures are not necessarily opposed, but in many cases buttress and supplement the arguments of the others. Moreover, he weaves his own thoughts into the mix, as the mortar holds the bricks, such that, by the end of the four chapters, he has presented a formidable system of environmental thought. In the second part, he puts this system to incisive use on a selection of classic environmental problems, including private property rights, the status and value of wilderness, the tragedy of the commons, and the cultural change required to truly manage our common home well; that is, to find the appropriate line between use and abuse, as he aptly puts it. In sum, this book presents a unique two-fold opportunity to the reader, new or old to the field, to (re)consider the thoughts of the environmental greats, and also to get an indispensable perspective on the pressing problems of our day. It is not to be missed!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A culture war of a different sort

By TAW If you haven't read Eric Freyfogle yet, you will find this a great introduction. If you have, you will find this a welcome new companion. Freyfogle travels here with many of familiar friends from past work (Leopold, Berry) and draws in some new ones (Pope Francis, David Orr). As usual, he takes his time with each thinker, engages with care and admiration, and yet asks how they -- and we -- might take their best ideas about conservation and go even further. Our times require better conservation than we are (mostly) offering. Freyfogle puts that squarely on our culture, and has thought for decades how we might develop an American culture worthy of our natural inheritance. Here he helps us see how we might begin to get there, thankfully without cynicism over our prospects.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Challenge the systems in which we are all embedded

By Robert Francis An important new entry in Prof. Eric Freyfogle's impressive body of work. Freyfogle's background as a legal scholar brings weight to this critical assessment of the environmental movement's most prominent thinkers, even as the writing always remains enjoyable and engaging for the casual reader. Freyfogle has a particular knack for distilling complex issues of environment, ethics, and law into direct, elegant prose, and the result is a thoughtful critique of modern culture, as well as the environmental movement itself. His ultimate message for us couldn't be more clear: If humans are to live well, we must change our culture.

Since the birth of the modern environmental movement in the 1970s, the United States has witnessed dramatic shifts in social equality, ecological viewpoints, and environmental policy. With these changes has also come an increased popular resistance to environmental reform, but, as Eric T. Freyfogle reveals in this book, that resistance has far deeper roots. Calling upon key environmental voices from the past and present including Aldo Leopold, Wendell Berry, David Orr, and even Pope Francis in his Encyclical and exploring core concepts like wilderness and the tragedy of the commons, *A Good That Transcends* not only unearths the causes of our embedded culture of resistance, but also offers a path forward to true, lasting environmental initiatives. A lawyer by training, with expertise in property rights, Freyfogle uses his legal knowledge to demonstrate that bad land use practices are rooted in the way in which we see the natural world, value it, and understand our place within it. While social and economic factors are important components of our current predicament, it is our culture, he shows, that is driving the reform crisis and in the face of accelerating environmental change, a change in culture is vital. Drawing upon a diverse array of disciplines from history and philosophy to the life sciences, economics, and literature, Freyfogle seeks better ways for humans to live in nature, helping us to rethink our relationship with the land and craft a new conservation ethic. By confronting our ongoing resistance to reform as well as pointing the way toward a common good, *A Good That Transcends* enables us to see how we might rise above institutional and cultural challenges, look at environmental problems, appreciate their severity, and both support and participate in reform.

Brilliant. Elegant. Excellent. Freyfogle's critique of the American land ethic penetrates deeper than most contemporary efforts and is especially praiseworthy because it goes the next step to explain and defend an alternative ethic based on good (ecological) land use, diffuse property rights, and revitalized communities. Bottom line: Freyfogle provides powerful and compelling arguments that cultural changes are needed if humanity is to address the environmental challenges of the Anthropocene. He weaves threads of his arguments through the works and lives of Aldo Leopold, David Orr, Garrett Hardin, and Wendell Berry, which he then uses to interpret and reinforce Pope Francis' encyclical on climate change. A masterful work. Freyfogle gives us the reasons to change and charts a path forward.