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BOOK REVIEW

Ecological Restoration: Principles, Values, and Structure of an Emerging Profession

Andre F. Clewell and James Aronson, 2008
Island Press, Washington, D.C.
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THE field of ecological restoration is a rapidly growing discipline that encompasses a wide range of activities and brings together practitioners and theoreticians from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. This textbook is part of the Science and Practice of Ecological Restoration Book Series which is intended to serve a broad audience of people who are active in the field of ecological restoration or have specialized interests in it. In the authors' own words, this book aims to move beyond the past twelve volumes in the series and create a unified vision of ecological restoration as a field of study, one that clearly states the discipline's precepts and emphasizes issues of importance to those involved at all levels. In doing this, the authors fundamentally aim to embrace a wider, holistic definition that takes into account both environmental and social components.

To achieve this, the authors outline four major aims: to identify fundamental concepts upon which restoration is based; to consider the principles of restoration practice; to explore the diverse values that are fulfilled with the restoration of ecosystems; and, to review the structure of restoration practice. The reviews of practice include various contexts for restoration work, the professional development of its practitioners, and the relationships of restoration with allied fields and activities.

I found the book goes some way in achieving these aims, but in an imbalanced manner. Due to the need to make the text relevant to all people involved with

ecological restoration, the text is light in detail for achieving the first two aims (i.e., identifying and describing fundamental concepts and principles of the discipline) and heavy on the last two (i.e., examining values and structures that underpin good ecological restoration activities). There was no mention, for example, of methodologies behind conducting system prioritization plans for where to conduct restoration activities, but a lot of detail on practical steps, such as how to engage local communities to conduct activities. For this reason, I think this book is more useful for practitioners actually conducting ecological restoration than for students studying the discipline in a more theoretical manner, or for planners, wanting to learn how to conduct restoration activities in the most effective manner.

A unique feature of the book is the inclusion of eight "virtual field trips": short photo essays of project sites around the world that illustrate various points made in the book and are "led" by those who were intimately involved with the project described. These field trips are case studies from all the inhabited continents, are different from each other, and cover a variety of different issues. The format of having these field trips entwined with the chapters of the book makes the book engaging and lively. However, the accompanying photographs are poor quality black-and-white reproductions, serving to break up the text rather than provide a more lucid visual representation of the discipline.

Despite these drawbacks, I would recommend the book to those working hands-on in the conception, planning and management of ecological restoration projects.

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