



After Preservation: Saving American Nature in the Age of Humans

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From John Muir to David Brower, from the creation of Yellowstone National Park to the Endangered Species Act, environmentalism in America has always had close to its core a preservationist ideal. Generations have been inspired by its ethos—to encircle nature with our protection, to keep it apart, pristine, walled against the march of human development. But we have to face the facts. Accelerating climate change, rapid urbanization, agricultural and industrial devastation, metastasizing fire regimes, and other quickening anthropogenic forces all attest to the same truth: the earth is now spinning through the age of humans. *After Preservation* takes stock of the ways we have tried to both preserve and exploit nature to ask a direct but profound question: what is the role of preservationism in an era of seemingly unstoppable human development, in what some have called the Anthropocene?

Ben A. Minteer and Stephen J. Pyne bring together a stunning consortium of voices comprised of renowned scientists, historians, philosophers, environmental writers, activists, policy makers, and land managers to negotiate the incredible challenges that environmentalism faces. Some call for a new, post-preservationist model, one that is far more pragmatic, interventionist, and human-centered. Others push forcefully back, arguing for a more chastened and restrained vision of human action on the earth. Some try to establish a middle ground, while others ruminate more deeply on the meaning and value of wilderness. Some write on species lost, others on species saved, and yet others discuss the enduring practical challenges of managing our land, water, and air.

From spirited optimism to careful prudence to critical skepticism, the resulting range of approaches offers an inspiring contribution to the landscape of modern environmentalism, one driven by serious, sustained engagements with the critical problems we must solve if we—and the wild garden we may now keep—are going to survive the era we have ushered in.

Contributors include: Chelsea K. Batavia, F. Stuart (Terry) Chapin III, Norman L. Christensen, Jamie Rappaport Clark, William Wallace Covington, Erle C. Ellis, Mark Fiege, Dave Foreman, Harry W. Greene, Emma Marris, Michelle Marvier, Bill McKibben, J. R. McNeill, Curt Meine, Ben A. Minteer, Michael Paul Nelson, Bryan Norton, Stephen J. Pyne, Andrew C. Revkin, Holmes Rolston III, Amy Seidl, Jack Ward Thomas, Diane J. Vosick, John A. Vucetich, Hazel Wong, and Donald Worster.

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Natalie Renz:

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Melvin Dwyer:

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