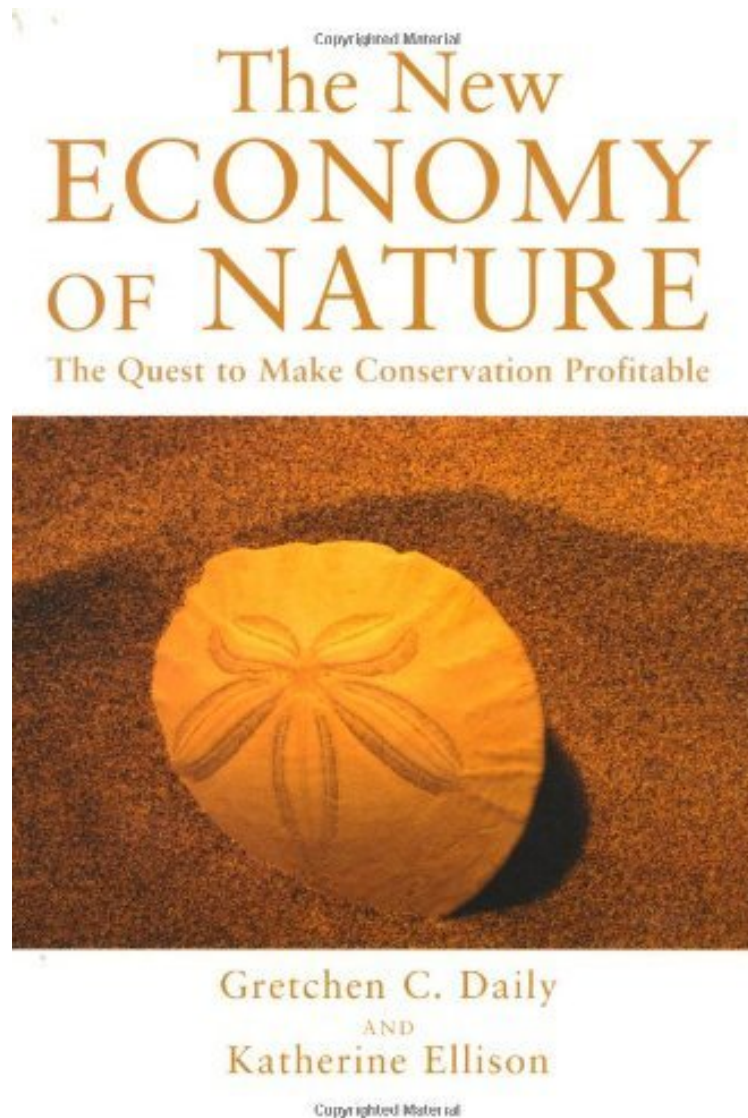


The New Economy of Nature: The Quest to Make Conservation Profitable (A Shearwater Book)

Gretchen Daily

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Gretchen Daily : The New Economy of Nature: The Quest to Make Conservation Profitable (A Shearwater Book) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The New Economy of Nature: The Quest to Make Conservation Profitable (A Shearwater Book):

10 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Supporting Player in Reframing Ecology as Economic By Robert David STEELE Vivas This is a fine book of short stories about success stories where environmental good is achieved while also demonstrating economic benefit in traditional terms. It is less effective at drawing generic lessons (other

than "sue them"). I would emphasize, however, that these are important stories and the book renders a valuable service in documenting them for on-going reference, similar in support status to everything written by Lester Brown. Bottom line: E.O. Wilson's "The Future of Life" is the best of the lot, see my review of that book for the best in class slice. The other book I recommend in support of E.O. Wilson's encompassing and specific work, is that by Brian Czech, on "Shoveling Fuel for a Runaway Train: Errant Economists, Shameful Spenders, and a Plan to Stop Them All." 22 of 27 people found the following review helpful. Mixed bag of stories

By Malvin Authors Gretchen Daily and Katherine Ellison have written an entertaining but ultimately unsatisfying book of case studies that are united around a common theme: namely, real-life projects in which for-profit capitalism and environmentalism may have found common ground. Daily and Ellison acknowledge the contradiction that such a task entails, but they seem all too eager to discover opportunities where nature can be exploited in new ways to suit capital's ever-changing needs (as if this insight was somehow novel!). In fact the individual case studies represent a mixed bag in that a few appear to offer some hope for the environment while others appear to offer more hope for capital's expansion than for the earth. But even among what I count as the more hopeful stories, precious little of the projects' success could be attributable to capital. Probably the best among them concerned the organic farming movement, which includes related efforts to preserve biodiversity and substitute natural predatory insects for pesticides. As everyone knows, this is a movement that has been defined by its explicit rejection of standard corporate practices, yet the authors sheepishly do little to point this out. Another excellent chapter focused on the efforts of a dedicated scientist to preserve rainforest in Costa Rica. But while the scientist helped broker a deal from an orange juice manufacturer to dump its waste in the rainforest to promote regrowth in damaged areas, it seemed clear that the Costa Rican government played a much larger role in the cause of preservation than the manufacturer ever did. And of course the watershed protection project for the New York City area was spearheaded by sometimes belligerent public interest groups and the local government over significant opposition from private-property forces. Among the less dubious stories: an Australian who is building Jurassic Park-style nature enclaves in hopes of attracting tourist dollars; an ex-Internet entrepreneur who hopes to cash in big by creating an overnight market for the buying and selling of the carbon-storing capacity of forests; and a political "deal maker" skilled in both obtaining and extracting concessions from developers in the hopes of merely slowing development. The market solutions highlighted in these and other stories point to the self-evident fragility of these projects to sustain themselves in the long run. In an unintentionally humorous part of the book, the authors recount a think-tank exercise in which EVERYONE participating in the pretend game of land stewardship clear-cut their forest assets in the final round of play in order to maximize their returns. My criticism is not that there isn't some merit in what the protagonists of these stories are doing -- they appear to be remarkable individuals who may simply be making the best of their bad situations -- but if the world's future is dependent on the success of these individuals in coming up with market solutions to the world's environmental problems, then may God help us all. In the end, this book fails to make a persuasive argument that capitalism can save the environment. There is some value to the case studies presented by the authors, especially where victories were achieved through democratic actions -- but this latter point was unfortunately down-played through much of the book in favor of the capitalist theme. But I think that contrary to the author's opinion, it seems obvious that the environment will continue to be exploited as long as for-profit capitalism rules the day. Therefore, I think that readers who want real answers to today's burgeoning environmental crisis will not find them in this book. 8 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Cash and the environment are now the same shade of green

By Customer Much of traditional environmental science reading is the harbinger of doom and suffers from one of two typical responses. (1) Reader fatigue from too many unremittingly bleak books or (2) Annoyance with increasingly strident chicken-little's. What a refreshing break it is then to read the optimistic views in THE NEW ECONOMY OF NATURE. And it's not because this book is in denial about the problems that exist. Nor is it deceptively panglossian like that bit of statistical chicanery offered by THE SKEPTICAL ENVIRONMENTALIST. What this book does very well is offer an alternative to the tried, tested, and failed approach of environmental/corporate confrontation. There has long been an awareness of the services that natural systems such as forests, wetlands, streams, tropical reefs, and oceans provide. Water purification, flood control, and climate regulation for instance. This book continues a recent trend in environmental science writing which is now putting a value on such free services. Others go further and quantify, in dollar terms, what the replacement costs for these ecosystems would be. (E. O. Wilson in THE FUTURE OF LIFE for instance). Because the numbers are so mind-boggling and impossible for any government to contemplate, it is a very effective technique for driving home the importance of these extremely valuable and fragile systems. As the authors say "it's time to begin figuring out how to assign economic value to ecosystems and the services they provide, and incorporate those values into public policy." The real value of this book is in the examples it offers. Rather than a discussion of environmental policy, Daily and Ellison focus on real solutions being implemented right now by entrepreneurs, visionary scientists, committed corporations, and active local governments. It's interesting also that most of the answers originated in the human imagination rather than in some new technological advancement. More than anything else this is the source of the authors' inspiration. It proves that people are actively re-thinking their approach rather than blithely waiting for a solution from on-high by gadget gurus. In their opening chapter "Katoomba and the Stratosphere" Daily and Ellison talk about the Katoomba Group

which represents just the sort of people leading this paradigm shift. Other innovative approaches are found in chapters titled "New York: How to Put a Watershed to Work" and "Costa Rica: Paying Mother Nature to Multitask". In the New York example the shift in thinking was to look at trees as something more valuable than lumber, recognize the contribution of standing forests to water purification and then to preserve them accordingly. City officials realized that it was more cost effective to protect watershed lands than to build a new filtration plant. The books ten chapters each give examples of similar such solutions. Most are within the Americas but "Down Under: How To Make a Numbat Turn a Profit" is a typical tale of outback ingenuity. The authors admit that the movement is not yet widespread and innovative thinking is still not the norm. Nevertheless their enthusiasm and convincing optimism makes the message of their Epilogue: "The Revolution in the Wings" one that is believable and more importantly, something in which we can actively participate.

Why shouldn't people who deplete our natural assets have to pay, and those who protect them reap profits? Conservation-minded entrepreneurs and others around the world are beginning to ask just that question, as the increasing scarcity of natural resources becomes a tangible threat to our own lives and our hopes for our children. The New Economy of Nature brings together Gretchen Daily, one of the world's leading ecologists, with Katherine Ellison, a Pulitzer-prize winning journalist, to offer an engaging and informative look at a new "new economy" - a system recognizing the economic value of natural systems and the potential profits in protecting them. Through engaging stories from around the world, the authors introduce readers to a diverse group of people who are pioneering new approaches to conservation. We meet Adam Davis, an American business executive who dreams of establishing a market for buying and selling "ecosystem service units;" John Wamsley, a former math professor in Australia who has found a way to play the stock market and protect native species at the same time; and Dan Janzen, a biologist working in Costa Rica who devised a controversial plan to sell a conservation area's natural waste-disposal services to a local orange juice producer. Readers also visit the Catskill Mountains, where the City of New York purchased undeveloped land instead of building an expensive new water treatment facility; and King County, Washington, where county executive Ron Sims has dedicated himself to finding ways of "making the market move" to protect the county's remaining open space. Daily and Ellison describe the dynamic interplay of science, economics, business, and politics that is involved in establishing these new approaches and examine what will be needed to create successful models and lasting institutions for conservation. The New Economy of Nature presents a fundamentally new way of thinking about the environment and about the economy, and with its fascinating portraits of charismatic pioneers, it is as entertaining as it is informative.

From Scientific American Daily and Ellison (respectively, a research scientist at Stanford University and an investigative journalist) write of projects that seek "green gold," which means recognizing that ecosystems are capital assets and managing them so that they "continue to yield wealth." Among their examples are New York City's watershed protection program, schemes for turning waste into something useful in Australia and Costa Rica, and a river restoration project in Napa, Calif. Editors of Scientific American About the Author Gretchen C. Daily is Bing Interdisciplinary Research Scientist at Stanford University. She is author of more than 90 articles and the editor of one of the most widely cited publications in modern environmental science, *Nature's Services* (Island Press, 1997), and has been recognized as a "Role Model for Ecology's Generation X" by Science magazine. Katherine Ellison is an investigative journalist and veteran foreign correspondent for Knight Ridder Newspapers, who has reported from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The recipient of a number of journalism prizes, including the George Polk Award and the Overseas Press Club Award, she won the Pulitzer Prize for a series in the San Jose Mercury News that became the basis for *Imelda: Steel Butterfly of the Philippines* (McGraw-Hill, 1988).