

Review: *Conservation and Environmentalism: An Encyclopedia.*

Edited by Robert Paheke

Reviewed by [James K. Lewis](#)
Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection

.....

Paheke, Robert, ed. *Conservation and Environmentalism: An Encyclopedia*. New York and London.: Garland Publishing, 1995. 771 pp. Index. U.S. \$95.00. cloth ISBN: 0-8240-6101-2. Recycled, acid-free paper.

There is a lot of information crowded into the 771 pages of *Conservation and Environmentalism: An Encyclopedia*. From "Abbey, Edward" to "Zoos, Institutions in Transition," the volume covers a wide range of important environmental and conservation topics. The entry "Biodepletion," which explains how we face the loss of 20 percent of all species within 30 years "and 50 percent more thereafter," is typical of the subjects addressed.

The encyclopedia is not limited to purely "scientific" topics. There is an extensive list of the world's green political parties, numerous biographical sketches (Robinson Jeffers, Russell W. Peterson, and Aldo Leopold, for example), and geographic and socio-political articles (Big Thicket and ecofeminism). There is even an article about the Walt Disney film, *Bambi*.

Conservation and Environmentalism also contains scathing indictments of currently popular ideas such as "sustainable development" and "sustainability." These ideas, the authors assert, will not live up to expectations without a complete rethinking of the way we live and work.

The index is extensive and thoroughly cross-referenced. I searched for information on global warming and found a very good article under the topic: "Climate Warming." The text also has cross references.

I first opened this encyclopedia in an airport, en route to the Everglades to discuss educating people about the needs of that beleaguered ecosystem. Naturally, I went first to the "Everglades" entry. Disjointed narrative and unclear sentences made it difficult to understand, even for one who knows the topic. Moreover, after reading that the ecosystems of Florida Bay and the Everglades are in "irreparable decay" (267), I

wondered why it is that hundreds of federal, state, and private scientists and environmentalists are working so hard down there. In fairness to the author, though, the article reads as if it has been taken apart and put back together by a heavy-handed editor, one concerned more with space than content.

Another point worth mentioning is the lack of illustrations. There are three maps and twenty difficult-to-find tables but no illustrations in this 771 page encyclopedia. And why, when Garland Publishing has offices in New York and London, would *Conservation and Environmentalism* be "available in North America only," as it says in the promotional flyer?

Despite these flaws, the articles in *Conservation and Environmentalism: An Encyclopedia* seem generally well written, informative, and accurate. The selections "for further reading" at the end of each section are invaluable for those who wish to delve deeper into a subject than is possible within a book of this size and scope. For \$95 (US), it won't find its way into many private libraries, but would be a nice addition to high school and college libraries.

James K. Lewis <lewis_j@dep.state.fl.us> is the Environmental Education Director at the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection in Tallahassee, Florida, USA.