

Review: *The Guide to Graduate Environmental Programs*
by Student Conservation Association

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Student Conservation Association. *The Guide to Graduate Environmental Programs*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997. 447 pp. US \$16.95 paper ISBN: 1-55963-340-9. US \$29.95 cloth ISBN: 1-55963-339-5. Recycled, acid-free paper.

Now here's a useful book -- mostly.

For those who are contemplating a jump into some environmental graduate school, *The Guide to Graduate Environmental Programs* is one place to start. It should not, however, be your only reference. To their credit, the compilers say much the same thing. The information in these pages was accurate as of November 1994. The book was published in 1997 -- and it is now 1999.

The book seems to imply a lack of planning on the part of would-be grad schoolers -- as if going for advanced studies is a spur-of-the-moment decision. For most of us, to go or not go to grad school is a decision made well in advance -- particularly in fields where an undergraduate background in somewhat specialized subjects is almost a prerequisite. The compilers seem to ignore the fact that these are specialized fields. Even for those of us who may head back to school after spending time in the workplace, earlier schooling is important. All that said, this IS a useful book. The brief Part I (pp. 3-36) discusses career opportunities (in the 90s) and recommends various strategies to follow when assessing possible graduate schools. One recommendation: look at where a school's graduates go after they're through. It is a hint about the kind of education you might receive. Part I provides detailed advice on the application process, then concludes with a summary overview of the kinds of graduate programs from which you may be choosing.

Part II (pp. 37-392) contains the meat. Here you find an alphabetical listing of more than 160 graduate programs. (Earlier (p. xv) we learned that 412 questionnaires were sent out, 156 were returned, and that the editors compiled information for a few other schools which did not

respond.)

Each program is discussed under ten or eleven useful headers: Name of Program (including contact names, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and World Wide Web sites); Quick Facts; Areas of Specialization; Special Program Features (cross registration with other schools or institutions, etc.); Admission Requirements; About the Students (number and sex and ethnic breakdown); About the Faculty; Tuition and Financial Aid; Facilities, Career Counseling and Job Placement; and Other Graduate Environmental Programs.

Three appendices provide information on additional schools that were not profiled (Appendix A pp. 395-404), the survey form (Appendix B, pp. 405-414), and Resources (Appendix C, pp. 415). Two helpful indexes are included: The Surveyed Universities by State, and by Specializations.

I would recommend this book -- but it should be used in concert with several others:

* *Environmental Careers In the 21st Century*. Island Press, 1999. Provides an up-to-date look at the job market in these fields

* *Making a Difference College Guide*. Sage Press, 1994, and *Education For The Earth*, Peterson's, 1995. Gives information about undergraduate programs that can prepare you for this kind of graduate work.

* *Peterson's Compact Guides: Graduate Studies in Physical Sciences, Mathematics & Environmental Sciences 1998*. Peterson's, 1998.

I own all but the last of these. They are all essential for someone who is planning advanced environmental studies.

One other resource that should be used to the fullest when planning your educational future are university sites on the World Wide Web. *The Guide to Graduate Environmental Programs* notes those that were available in 1994, but you should do a web search for additional (or changed) addresses.

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