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Review: Saving Puget Sound: a Conservation Strategy for the 21st Century

By John Lombard

Reviewed by Ryder W. Miller

San Francisco, USA

John Lombard. *Saving Puget Sound: A Conservation Strategy for the 21st Century*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007. 336 pp. ISBN: 0-295-98674-3. \$US35
Acid free paper.

John Lombard, an environmental consultant in Washington State, gives an impassioned plea to save the Puget Sound region from the future population growth that has been forecast. Lombard takes a regional approach to protecting the Puget Sound and the forested mountains that surround it. Attached to the sea, the Puget Sound is one of the largest estuaries in the country, and many watersheds enter into it. The area is a national and natural treasure, and tourist destination, abundant with wildlife. Orcas, eagles, songbirds, and salmon, are part of the nearby citizens' everyday lives. "Fish and wildlife native to our region teach us what it means to call this place home. If they can no longer live here, we ignore the message at our peril. The message is not just that resources we mutually depend on are being degraded or lost. Something fundamental to our humanity is being lost as well" (p. xiv).

Arguing that it will take more than government to protect the area and that citizen participation will also be necessary, Lombard says that "we must answer the following questions if we are to conserve our heritage:

Where are we going to allow significant new harm to occur?

Where are we going to do our best to avoid it?

Where are we going to make up for past harm?

How are we going to pay for all this?" (p. ix).

Saving Puget Sound is dense with details about the historic, regional, and legal framework that bounds the environmental decisions that are made about the area, and about how a whole set of environmental laws have impacted the region. The book will mobilize the environmental troops that live in the area, and inspire those who visit to care about this wonderful place. Lombard is convinced that further action is necessary: "A different future is possible, but it requires that we change the scale of our laws and institutions to match those of our ecosystems. There is no other way to conserve our national heritage, given the pressures of population growth and climate change" (p. 319).

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