

## **Review: Making Nature Whole: A History of Ecological Restoration**

By William R. Jordan III and George M. Lubick

Reviewed by Byron Anderson

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Jordan, William R., III and George M. Lubick. *Making Nature Whole: A History of Ecological Restoration*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011. 256 pp. ISBN: 978-1-59726-512-6 US \$70 cloth; 978-1-59726-513-3 US \$35 paper. Printed on recycled, acid-free paper.

*Making Nature Whole* is the story of ecological restoration primarily covering the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the current time. Ecological restoration is a human effort to recreate entire ecosystems. It represents “the deepest acknowledgment of the value of the ecosystems being restored” (p. 21), and is a “demanding test of allegiance to the notion of intrinsic value” (p. 209). The book initially focuses on six restoration projects, four in the United States and two in Australia that developed from the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-1930s. Explored are how these projects came about, who carried them out and why, and what has happened to this form of land management since the mid-1930s. While little restoration activity occurred between 1940 to the mid-1970s, since that time ecological restoration has been accepted as a formidable land management philosophy.

Ecological restoration goes beyond other restorative and conservation efforts that tend to treat land in an anthropocentric way, that is, as human habitat. Ecological restoration values nature for its own sake which implies an intrinsic value apart from man’s own interests. The restoration gives species a right to exist on their own, unaided, and may include unappealing or dangerous species, such as poison ivy and rattle snakes. Ecological restoration is not without critics as many believe that restoration should not be undertaken unless it improves on the current condition of the land.

Ecological restoration was not a formalized land management technique in its early development, but rather evolved through numerous trial and error efforts by a diverse assortment of individuals, such as gardeners, scientists, and others. Tensions prevailed in the evolution of restoration that included contrasting ideologies, for example, John Muir’s reverence for nature versus Gifford Pinchot’s managerial philosophy. By the 1970s, key agencies and organizations, such as the National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy, came to recognize the value of ecological restoration. By the 1990s, both ecological restoration and biodiversity were mainstay land management ideologies. Numerous projects worldwide have been influenced by ecological restoration, including a wide range of ecosystems, for example, reefs and high-altitude systems. Though ecological restoration is not formally recognized as a profession, restoration studies are now part of teaching and research at some thirty North American institutions of higher education, and for some, is recognized as its own discipline.

*Making Nature Whole* would be an authoritative source for any discussion of either the future of restoration or man’s relationship with nature. William Jordan is Director of the New Academy for Nature and Culture and Co-director of the Institute for Nature and Culture at DePaul University and George Lubrick is Professor of History at Northern Arizona University. The book is part of the Society for Ecological Restoration’s “The Science and Practice of Ecological Restoration” series. While there are other recent books about ecological restoration, for example, F. A.

Comín's *Ecological Restoration: A Global Challenge* (2010), Jordan and Lubick's book is a definitive history of the subject, and is highly recommended for academic and large public library collections and for supplemental reading in related college courses.

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**Electronic Green Journal, Issue 34, Winter 2012, ISSN: 1076-7975**