



A World to Live In: An Ecologist's Vision for a Plundered Planet (MIT Press)

By George M. Woodwell



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A century of industrial development is the briefest of moments in the half billion years of the earth's evolution. And yet our current era has brought greater changes to the earth than any period in human history. The biosphere, the globe's life-giving envelope of air and climate, has been changed irreparably. In *A World to Live In*, the distinguished ecologist George Woodwell shows that the biosphere is now a global human protectorate and that its integrity of structure and function are tied closely to the human future.

The earth is a living system, Woodwell explains, and its stability is threatened by human disruption. Industry dumps its waste globally and makes a profit from it, invading the global commons; corporate interests overpower weak or nonexistent governmental protection to plunder the planet. The fossil fuels industry offers the most dramatic example of environmental destruction, disseminating the heat-trapping gases that are now warming the earth and changing the climate forever. The assumption that we can continue to use fossil fuels and "adapt" to climate disruption, Woodwell argues, is a ticket to catastrophe.

But Woodwell points the way toward a solution. We must respect the full range of life on earth -- not species alone, but their natural communities of plant and animal life that have built, and still maintain, the biosphere. We must recognize that the earth's living systems are our heritage and that the preservation of the integrity of a finite biosphere is a necessity and an inviolable human right.

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Editorial Review

Review

Very few have devoted careers as long or as eminent to the preservation of the planet. George Woodwell has earned the right to sum up a lifetime's worth of thinking, and he does so here with precision and panache.

(Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature*)

From the birth of modern environmentalism in the 1960s right up to today, ecologist George Woodwell has brought pathbreaking science, sound policy judgment, and great humanity to the major issues: nuclear radiation, DDT, climate change, deforestation, water pollution, biotic impoverishment of oceanic and other ecosystems. And it all comes brilliantly through in his informative, highly readable, and bracing new book. Woodwell, himself a force of nature, has seen it all up close, in the fight throughout, yet his conclusions are full of good hope: the very science so long ignored provides the guidance for new rules now so desperately needed.

(James Gustave Speth, author of *America the Possible: Manifesto for a New Economy* and former Dean, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies)

From the dean of US climate scientists, a wise and eloquent call to common-sense climate and environmental policy. Its message is authoritative but accessible, urgent without panic, visionary but practical.

(David W. Orr, Counselor to the President and Paul Sears Distinguished Professor, Emeritus, Oberlin College)

About the Author

George M. Woodwell is Founder, President, and Director Emeritus of the Woods Hole Research Center, Woods Hole, Massachusetts. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, a former president of the Ecological Society of America, a founding trustee and Vice Chairman of the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the author of *Forests in a Full World*, *The Nature of House: Building a World That Works*, and other books.

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