

Eastern Old-Growth Forests Examined

Old-growth forest—loosely described as forest that appears largely as it would have if Europeans had not settled North America—is of incalculable value. Old-growth sites can play a key role in plans for restoration of large areas of wilderness. Some, with restoration, could become core areas for future wildernesses, while others could become nodes of biodiversity linked by corridors. Scientists are just beginning to discover ways in which old-growth is biologically unique.

Eastern Old-Growth Forests: Prospects for Rediscovery and Recovery (ISBN 1-55963-408-1 [hardcover] and ISBN 1-

55963-409-x [softcover]) is the first book devoted exclusively to old growth throughout the Eastern United States. Edited by Mary Byrd Davis, the book offers authoritative essays by leading experts and is divided into three main sections.

Biological and Cultural Values:

The ways in which old-growth forest differs biologically from second-growth forest, a topic that researchers are just beginning to understand, are explored, and the impact of old growth on the human psyche and the importance of old growth to the culture of Native Americans point to the cultural value of old growth.

Identification:

Single ecosystems, including old-growth forests of southern New England, New York, and Pennsylvania, and of the Great Lakes, are considered.

Preservation and Restoration:

Examples of current preservation and restoration efforts are discussed and recommendations for further work are given.

These essays are framed by an introduction in which Robert Leverett analyzes historic views of forests and current definitions of old growth, and Davis explains the extent and location of Eastern old growth, and an epilogue in which Bill McKibben presents the remnants of original forest as a foreshadowing of the glory of the East's future forests.

Much remains to be learned about old-growth forest. This book will spur further efforts to identify, evaluate, preserve, and restore the forests that are its subject. It is available from Island Press (202) 234-7933.