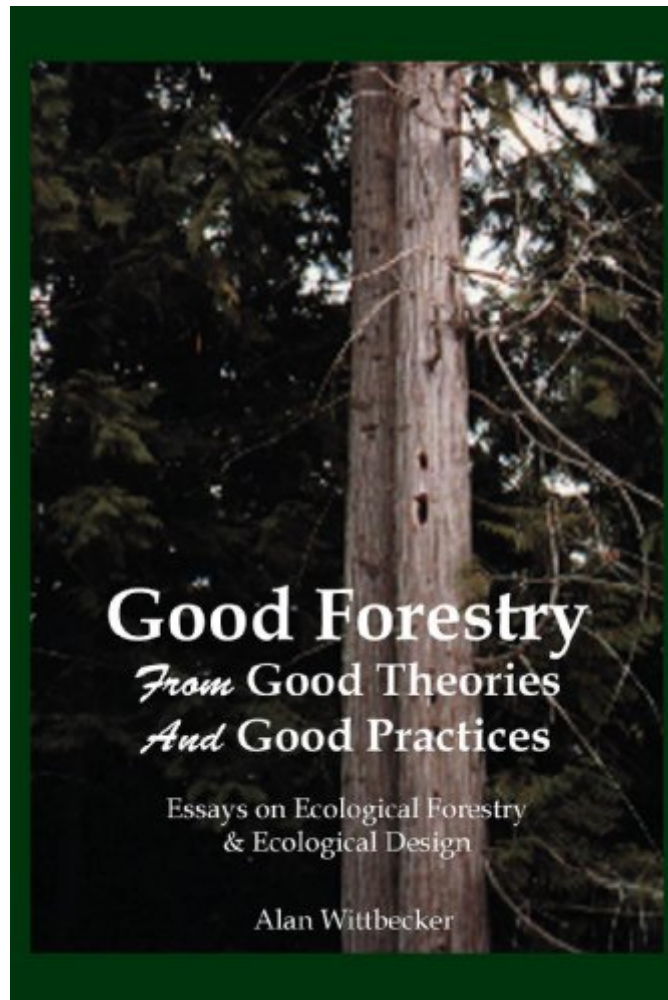




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Good Forestry From Good Theories & Good Practices



Synopsis

These essays on ecological forestry and the ecological design of forest systems have been written over a thirty-year period and range from a discussion of the philosophical foundations of preservation and restoration to the design and restoration of forest ecosystems. Most of these essays were published in professional journals, although a few have been taken from lectures or talks at conferences (with minimum changes for the book). In general they are presented in chronological order. This order can also be interpreted as the going from the general to the specific, and from the theoretical to the practical. Thus, ideas presented rapidly in the beginning are fleshed out in middle essays and finally applied in specific northwest forests in the final section. The book is divided into three sections. The first section starts with a presentation of the kinds of interactions in nature, describing normal interactions in nature, such as exploitation and disturbance, and contrasting them with ecosystem-destroying interference, whether natural, e.g., earthquakes, or human, e.g., poisoning with exotic substances. Principles of ecological forestry are derived from philosophical and scientific theories. Metaphysical principles are then applied to radical conservation programs, such as Earth First!, which are designed to protect threatened ecosystems. Conservation and preservation are grounded in a metaphor useful for describing these necessary practices. A larger form of ethics is described, that is mindful of nonhuman beings as well as of ecosystems. Gandhian nonviolence is examined as a model for ethical interactions in using and protecting forests. A series of implications and principles are derived from the sciences of physics and ecology, and then related to ecological field practices in forests. Ecoforestry is shown to benefit from wild thinking, as opposed to domestic thinking, which is dominated by economic motives. Thought experiments are described and recommended for some ecoforestry projects. The second section questions the philosophy and application of ecoforestry. Questioning is used to examine ideas of global planning, sustainability, education, and certification—the implications of certification are expanded. Through questioning, the worth of a typical forest is addressed, as is preservation and the relation of forestry to other professions and human activities. Clearcutting, new forestry, and forest financing are also questioned. The third section starts by describing very-long-term trends in forest ecosystem use over the past several thousand years. The health of forests is investigated and defined. Forestry as a science is grounded in ecology and philosophy. A program of forestry research is outlined, using these principles as a foundation. A framework for forest design and restoration is outlined. The practice of ecological forestry is delineated in a series of chapters, using the author's thirty years of experience in the Pacific Northwest. Finally, forestry itself is characterized not only as a biological unified field theory, but as ecosystem medicine and poetic

activity, which is the most appropriate kind of activity for working in long-lived, complex ecological systems as a participant. Readers with a preference for bald assertions and theory can limit their attention to the first two sections. Readers with interest in practices in the field, regardless of the theoretical basis, can start with the third section. Of course, the practice was developed during those years in the field and specifically linked to the sometimes raw or unfinished ideas presented as theories, so readers who can follow the whole trail might enjoy a better understanding of the way things developed.

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