

Conservation for a New Generation. Richard L. Knight and Courtney White, editors. 2008. Island Press, Washington, DC, USA. 336 p. US\$60.00. hardcover. ISBN 9-781597264372.

Conservation for a New Generation is a collection of 24 thought-provoking essays that contribute to “Redefining Natural Resources Management.” The diverse contributions provide an inspiring introduction to many of the challenges and opportunities currently faced by individuals and organizations working to sustain the land and seas for future generations. The relatively brief essays are readable and engaging, in part because most are based on the author(s)’ personal experiences. Some of the essays are extensively footnoted, providing links to other resources. The volume is well organized and clearly benefited from thoughtful editing by Knight, White, and the editors at Island Press.

Although it is difficult to find fault with such a positive, clearly written volume, two aspects seem to be at odds with its theme. With the exception of an inspiring essay on Midwestern farming, soils are virtually invisible, and soil science appears as neither a traditional nor an emerging discipline in the Introduction. A lack of understanding of how soil potential varies across landscapes and regions is a recurring source of the conflicts that the book attempts to address. Second, the promotion of collaborative approaches does not appear to be reflected in authorship, because all but three essays are sole authored. Although individual reflection can bring clarity, co-authorship is an effective way to encourage dialogue about unacknowledged differences in opinion, to generate new ideas, and to encourage academics and others to continue to break down barriers associated with traditional disciplines.

These issues in no way detract from the overall value of the book, which should be of value for students, experienced practitioners, scientists, activists, landowners, and anyone who is interested in moving beyond conflict to create sustainable solutions. All of the essays could be easily read in a single sitting during a long winter evening, but are perhaps better absorbed individually, because each brings a unique and diverse perspective to the continuing conversation about how to sustain the earth’s ecosystems.

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