
Forests for the future

The Dutch NGO BothENDS has recently published "Forests for the Future: Local Strategies for Forest Protection, Economic Welfare and Social Justice", edited by Paul Wolvekamp, Ann Danaiya Usher, Vijay Paranjpye, and Madhu Ramnath.

The book addresses the question of how local and indigenous communities can maintain the balance between their societies and their forest environments when faced with increasing external pressures, rising populations and growing demands for basic needs and cash.

Causes of deforestation usually lie outside the forest. World demand for wood, paper and the raw materials determine the fate of the forest, rather than local peoples' needs and forest conservation. As for the efforts by governments or corporations to restore and manage forest environments, they are often either non-existent or at best ineffective.

And yet, within communities who depend on forests, there frequently exists a wealth of knowledge about rational land use and environmental protection. The case studies in this volume come from all around the world and include tropical, temperate and boreal zones. They describe the positive efforts undertaken to consolidate or adapt local forest management systems to a changing environment.

One of the things that distinguishes this book is that its contributors belong to local groups involved in these efforts. The book presents their experiences and recommendations on how to re-establish community control over forest lands and preserve them for the future.

"Any time you hear someone say there are 'no alternatives' to centralised state control of sensitive forest areas, reach for this book. Providing the sort of perspective that can come only from those closely engaged in the tough realities of local forest struggles, it both informs and inspires" commented Larry Lohmann, coauthor of "Pulping the South", on this new book.