

Forest Policies and Social Change in England (World Forests)

Sylvie Nail



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Forestry has been witness to some dramatic changes in recent years, with several Western countries now moving away from the traditional model of regarding forests merely as sources of wood. Rather these countries are increasingly recognizing their forests as multi-purpose resources with roles which go far beyond simple economics. In this innovative book, Sylvie Nail uses England as a case study to explore the relationships between forests, society and public perceptions, raising important questions about forest policy and management both now and in the future.

Adopting a sociological approach to forest policy and management, the book discusses the current validity of the two principles underlying forestry since the Middle Ages: first, that forestry should only exist when no better use of the land can be made, and second, that forestry itself should be profitable. The author stresses how values and perceptions shape policies, and conversely how policies can modify perceptions, and also how policies can fail if they do not take perceptions into account. She concludes that many of the issues facing English forestry in the 21st century – from leisure, health and amenity provision, through education and rural as well as urban regeneration, to biodiversity conservation – go well beyond both national borders and the scope of forestry. Indeed forestry in the 21st century seems to be less about planting and managing trees than about being a vector and a mirror of social change.

This novel synthesis provides a valuable resource for advanced students and researchers from all areas of natural resource studies, including those interested in social history, socio-economics, cultural geography and environmental psychology, as well as those studying landscape ecology, environmental history, policy analysis and natural resource management.

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