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Review: Hope's Horizon: Three Visions for Healing the American Land

By Chip Ward

Reviewed by [Kurt A. Rosentrater](#)
United States Department of Agriculture, USA

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Chip Ward. *Hope's Horizon: Three Visions for Healing the American Land*.
Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2004. 350 pp. ISBN 1-55963-977-6.
US\$27.00 cloth. Recycled, acid-free paper.

Chip Ward, in his new book *Hope's Horizon*, emphatically relays the message that using the environment as a sacrifice for constructing and sustaining our society must come to an end. He argues that it is time to restore balance between our civilization and the ecosystems of which it is a part. He portrays this ongoing effort to protect and restore the environment as a significant challenge, fraught with many obstacles, but it is not an endeavor that is yet beyond hope. Progress is being made toward this end even if it appears slow in materializing. In fact, people's perceptions and attitudes, if not their actions, are evolving over time. This is due, in good measure, to scores of people working within the context of the modern environmental movement.

In this work, Ward describes several current environmental issues, the problems surrounding them, and the people working to change the status quo. He provides a highly personal account of their histories, successes, and failures. Above all, however, he relates their deep sense of enthusiasm and purpose.

Ward accomplishes this by dividing his work into three unique, yet thematically connected, segments. The first discusses the rewilding of North America, or at least portions thereof, with reclaimed indigenous wildlife habitat. The second discusses the Colorado River basin. Specifically, he explains the "reclamation" of Glen Canyon into Lake Powell by the construction of the Glen Canyon Dam in 1963, the resulting aftermath on the ecosystems, and current efforts to restore the native habitat. The third discusses hazardous and nuclear waste disposal in the Great Basin Desert, especially the issues surrounding the development of Yucca Mountain as a federal nuclear waste repository.

Ward provides a highly personal account of the contemporary environmental movement in the United States, and relays a thorough, comprehensive background regarding many environmental issues that must be dealt with, as well as the people and locations that are involved. He uses extensive metaphors and humor, with flashbacks as well as personal stories, to

accomplish this fast-paced narrative.

In *Hope's Horizon*, Ward describes his three-year expedition around the United States in pursuit of these people who are actively engaged in promoting, improving, and protecting the environment. His journey includes locations such as Vermont, Colorado, the Sonoran Desert in New Mexico and Arizona, New York's Lake Champlain, Utah, Lake Powell in Colorado, and Washington D.C., to name a few.

Ward targets both environmental generalists as well as specialists with this book, so that laypeople as well as technical practitioners should find this account compelling. For those who have not yet been involved with the environmental movement, this book will be eye-opening, yet encouraging. Moreover, it will provide motivation and inspiration for those who already are actively involved.

Hope's Horizon engagingly relays three unique, yet connected, visions for addressing modern environmental needs. These are, in fact, representative of many overarching issues that currently face our society, so this book is definitely worth reading.

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