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Democratic or authoritarian, every society needs clean air and water; every state must manage its wildlife and natural resources. In this provocative, comparative study, Paul R. Josephson asks to what extent the form of a government and its economy--centrally planned or market, colonial or post-colonial--determines how politicians, bureaucrats, scientists, engineers, and industrialists address environmental and social problems presented by the transformation of nature into a humanized landscape.

Looking at the experiences of the industrialized and industrializing world, Resources under Regimes explores the relationship between science, technology, and the environment. Josephson considers global responses to deforestation, water pollution, and global warming, showing how different societies bring different values and assumptions to bear on the same problem, and arrive at different conclusions about the ideal outcome and the best way of achieving it. He reveals the important ways in which modern governments facilitate power generation, transportation, water production, and other technologies that improve the quality of life; and the equally critical ways in which they respond to the resulting depredations--the pollution, waste, and depletion that constitute the global environmental crisis at the beginning of the twenty-first century.