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Sinopsis

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Buying land to conserve it is not a recent phenomenon. Buying Nature chronicles the evolution of land acquisition as a conservation strategy in the United States since the late 1700s. It goes beyond the usual focus on conservation successes to provide a critical assessment of both public and private land acquisition efforts.

The book shows that for more than 200 years, both private purchasers such as the Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land and governmental agencies have acquired land for conservation. It documents trends of growing complexity in transactions and a blurring of public and private roles. The preservation of Mount Vernon and its grounds, for example, began with a private group the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union and continues today with a mosaic of private, state, and federal actors. The current emphasis on private land trust acquisitions, the authors argue, may undercut other effective governmental efforts to preserve the environment and may not be the best way to meet conservation goals.

Buying Nature emphasizes the accountability issues that arise when the line between public and private efforts is indistinct. The authors also pay unique attention to how federal land agencies' individual histories shape their participation in modern land acquisition transactions. An unusual mix of scholarship, the book combines political, legal and constitutional, and economic history with rich case studies of land conservation and quantitative analyses of acquisitions over time to provide a new and distinctive perspective on enduring questions of public policy and environmental protection.

.About the Authors

Sally K. Fairfax is Henry J. Vaux Distinguished Professor Emerita in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management at the University of California, Berkeley.

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Endorsements

"The authors of *Buying Nature* use their considerable interdisciplinary talent to make sense of the patchwork practices of land conservation in the United States. The compelling evidence they marshal defies all simple solutions dictated by ideology. The book is required reading for anyone interested in natural resources policy."

_Helen Ingram, Professor of Political Science and Warmington Endowed Chair in the School of Social Ecology, University of California, Irvine

"*Buying Nature* is the definitive work on land acquisition for conservation purposes in the United States. With its sweeping history and critical assessment of public and private policies, the book redefines how we think_and how we should think_about land acquisition. The wealth of information alone will make *Buying Nature* a standard reference for academics and practitioners for years to come. The policy critique makes this information immediately relevant."

_Craig W. Thomas, Department of Political Science, University of Massachusetts Amherst

"To truly protect land you need to own it or a portion of the rights to it. But who owns, how did they gain ownership, and how do they manage the land are questions unasked until Fairfax and her coauthors wrote this book. By carefully exploring the mosaic of actors, tools, controls, and conservation authorities, they identify the complexities and diversity of modern conservation management. Every student of public lands and conservation policies should read this book."

_Randy T. Simmons, Professor and Department Head, Department of Political Science, Utah State University

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