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As the challenge of global climate change intensifies, environmentalists have called for redoubled efforts to preserve forests and ecosystems that are critical in balancing greenhouse gas emissions. Conservation finance is the subject of this volume, based on a conference held in January 2009 in Chile attended by more than 100 conservationists and policy makers, to consider methods to find financial capital - as well as human, social, and natural capital - to steward the earth's resources for future generations.

Conservation finance innovations are central to protecting ecosystems, and Chile has an ambitious program of land conservation involving public-private partnerships, incentives, and a legal framework undergirding financing mechanisms. The contributors to Conservation Capital in the Americas include some of the leading thinkers on conservation finance in the world, who asked: Where do we find the money, the talent, and the political will to do the jobs necessary to address complex threats to ecosystems that provide a spectrum of essential services that sustain life? The answers suggest the need for carefully crafted solutions in conservation finance, to fit different local land ownership patterns, political contexts, and economic conditions.

The volume, edited by James N. Levitt, director of the Program on Conservation Innovation at the Harvard Forest, Harvard University, and a research fellow at the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard Kennedy School, details new approaches in conservation finance, from the art of conservation deal-making to the practice of sustainable development, that are being invented and implemented around the world.

Conservation finance innovations are presented through case studies in pairs, from North America and Latin America, for each of seven topics: conservation finance efforts in Chile and New England; tax-related initiatives in Massachusetts (the Community Preservation Act) and in Chile (the Private Lands Conservation Initiative); conservation finance through limited development; financing sustainable development; conservation investment banking; carbon-related ecosystem services; and noncarbon ecosystem services.