



## Democratic Dilemmas in the Age of Ecology: Trees and Toxics in the American West

*Daniel Press*

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Environmental problems present democratic dilemmas. The problems are so large and so often pit localities and interest groups against each other that they challenge basic democratic institutions, particularly the ideal of citizen participation in society's choices. In this book, Daniel Press examines the conflict between environmental political thought and democratic theory and asks whether successful environmental protection is beyond the capabilities of democratic decisionmaking.

Press introduces the primary debate in this confrontation as a choice between political centralization and decentralization. Do citizens faced with environmental crises tend to look first to a centralized leadership for solutions or do they tend to respond at a more local and grassroots level? What is the role of technical expertise in this process and how does it effect public participation in these matters? Do confrontations over environmental issues increase support for a more fully democratic decisionmaking process? Representing social, political, and economic challenges to democracy, these and other questions are then investigated empirically through analyses of case studies. Focusing on two recent controversies in the western United States, ancient-forest logging in Oregon and California and hazardous waste management in California, and drawing on in-depth interviews with individuals involved, Press clarifies the relationship between environmentalism and democracy and explores the characteristics of "new" democratic forms of environmental policymaking.

Revealing a need for a more decentralized process and increased individual and collective action in response to environmental crises, *Democratic Dilemmas in the Age of Ecology* will be of interest to a wide range of audiences, from scholars concerned with applications of democratic theory, to activists and policymakers seeking to change or implement environmental policy.



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