

Canopy of Titans: The Life and Times of the Great North American Temperate Rainforest

Paul Koberstein

Jessica Applegate

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The temperate rain forest of the North Pacific coast is so valuable an ecosystem that it has been dubbed “the Amazon of the North.” It holds the world’s tallest trees—“carbon-capturing machines.” In *Canopy of Titans*, Paul Koberstein and Jessica Applegate investigate the forest’s history and species, issuing a solemn warning about future destruction.

Koberstein and Applegate note that forests store one-quarter of the world’s carbon emissions, and say that planting an additional 1 trillion trees could help stabilize the climate. However, logging of old-growth forests still takes place in Oregon, and the impacts of tree removal on wildlife have been severe: the salmon of the North Pacific are declining. As well as diseases, splash dams created for logging still impact their populations by blocking salmon runs, which also limits local orcas. Beavers, a sign of healthy estuaries, are also in need of conservation. And yellow cedars, besieged by hotter soil, may go extinct.

Koberstein and Applegate also cover local challenges to Native Americans, including the shameful Oregon Coast Treaty of 1855, which was followed by genocide and people’s forced removal onto reservations. A guest chapter by Native American journalist Terri Hansen underscores the vulnerability of tribal communities.

Koberstein and Applegate embrace a policy of “proforestation”—not just preserving all current forest ecosystems, but choosing to create more. They argue that the Biden administration took a promising change of direction, but that its regulations did not go far enough in a time of multiple “last chances.” While it includes many names, dates, and acronyms, they are important to telling the forest’s intricate story.

A saga of a magnificent forest and a charm against deforestation that’s complemented by eighteen pages of black-and-white photographs, *Canopy of Titans* is as magisterial as the trees it memorializes.

REBECCA FOSTER (January / February 2023)

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