FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Science Under Siege: The Politician's War on Nature and Truth

Todd Wilkinson
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In a perfect world, government scientists would be charged with providing unbiased, accurate ecological information that would automatically be factored into natural resource management policies. In the real world, however, such information often implies serious limitations on resource exploitation in order to protect endangered species, ecosystem integrity and/or resource renewability. These recommended limitations in turn spawn nasty debates between scientists and diverse resource user groups and their representatives in Congress. The scientist—and often the resource they struggle to protect—usually lose, according to Montana-based environmental commentator/author Todd Wilkinson. Science Under Siege contains eight case histories of "combat biologists" and "whistleblowers" under political, career-threatening fire from resource developers and their advocates in government agencies. This book will undoubtedly enrage development-friendly readers, which is unfortunate in an age that is long on intolerance and short on compromise in natural resource conflicts. Conversely, environmentalists will love it. The book even includes a foreword by Sierra Club hero David Brower, who implies that it earns a place on your shelf alongside Aldo Leopold's A Sand County Almanac. But does it really?

Science strives to reach that vast majority of America that is undecided in the spectrum of opinions on natural resource management. Wilkinson builds a convincing argument for political reform in our nation's natural resource agencies—reform based on good science, respect for personal liberties and the environmental mission of resource stewards, and land management policies arising from research rather than bought with corporate incentives. However, he often allows the book to drift from the dynamics of bio-politics to sentimentalized, alarmist tangents on our troubled landscape. These tangents seem designed to appeal to the undecided masses on an emotional level, and, unfortunately, clutter up the bio-political narrative considerably. Documentation is somewhat sketchy. There are no chapter endnotes or footnotes, but instead an awkwardly formatted mass of references at the closing of the book. We often wonder, for example, when a personal interview ends and a government report begins.

Natural resource politics is a highly complex subject. There is much research and

thought that went into this book, but there is also no shortage of spin.

David Speas