



Germany's Nature: Cultural Landscapes and Environmental History

Thomas Zeller

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Germany boasts one of the strongest environmental records in the world. The Rhine River is cleaner than it has been in decades, recycling is considered a civic duty, and German manufacturers of pollution-control technology export their products around the globe. Yet, little has been written about the country's remarkable environmental history, and even less of that research is available in English.

Now for the first time, a survey of the country's natural and cultural landscapes is available in one volume. Essays by leading scholars of history, geography, and the social sciences move beyond the Green movement to uncover the enduring yet ever-changing cultural patterns, social institutions, and geographic factors that have sustained Germany's relationship to its land.

Unlike the American environmental movement, which is still dominated by debates about wilderness conservation and the retention of untouched spaces, discussions of the German landscape have long recognized human impact as part of the "natural order." Drawing on a variety of sites as examples, including forests, waterways, the Autobahn, and natural history museums, the essays demonstrate how environmental debates in Germany have generally centered on the best ways to harmonize human priorities and organic order, rather than on attempts to reify wilderness as a place to escape from industrial society.

Germany's Nature is essential reading for students and professionals working in the fields of environmental studies, European history, and the history of science and technology.

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