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978-0-521-68713-3 - The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment,
Second Edition

Mark Sagoff

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The Economy of the Earth, Second Edition

Mark Sagoff draws on the last twenty years of debate over the foundations of environmentalism in this comprehensive revision of *The Economy of the Earth*. Posing questions pertinent to consumption, cost-benefit analysis, the normative implications of neo-Darwinism, the role of natural history, and the centrality of the concept of place in environmental ethics, he analyzes social policy in relation to the environment, pollution, the workplace, and public safety and health. Sagoff distinguishes ethical from economic questions and explains which kinds of concepts, arguments, and processes are appropriate to each. He offers a critique of “preference” and “willingness to pay” as measures of value in environmental economics and defends political, cultural, aesthetic, and ethical reasons to protect the natural environment.

Mark Sagoff directs and is a Senior Research Scholar at the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park. The author of *Price, Principle and the Environment* (2004), he has published widely in journals of law, philosophy, and the environment. Dr. Sagoff was named a Pew Scholar in Conservation and the Environment in 1991 and was a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in 1998. He is also a Fellow of the Hastings Center and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

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MARK SAGOFF

Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy
University of Maryland



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*For my father
who gave me my first copy of Thoreau's Walden*

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page ix</i>
1 Introduction	1
2 At the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima <i>or</i> Why Political Questions Are Not All Economic	24
3 The Allocation and Distribution of Resources	46
4 Values and Preferences	67
5 Can We Put a Price on Nature’s Services?	87
6 Do We Consume Too Much?	110
7 Is an Environmental Ethic Compatible with Biological Science?	137
8 Settling America <i>or</i> the Concept of Place in Environmental Ethics	157
9 Natural and National History	175
10 Environmentalism: Death and Resurrection	194
<i>Notes</i>	209
<i>Index</i>	259

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[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

The second edition of this book represents a total overhaul and complete revision of the first. Only Chapters 2, 3, and 8 bear any resemblance to text found in the earlier edition; the other chapters were written in recent years. Although this is essentially a new book, many of the acknowledgments remain the same. I wrote the second edition as I did the first while at the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park. There is little in this essay that did not arise out of discussion with my colleagues at the Institute and the School, or from some thought suggested by their work, or in response to their sympathetic criticism, or to the ideas they offered me. No research center other than the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy, as far as I know, provides a similar opportunity for philosophers to pursue politically informed conceptual analysis on a sustained basis. Each page of this book acknowledges implicitly, as I do explicitly here, the help I received from my colleagues at the Institute over the years – editors Claudia Mills, Arthur Evenchik, and Verna Gehring and researchers (past and present) David Crocker, Robert Fullinwider, William Galston, Peter Levine, Xiaorong Li, Judith Lichtenberg, David Luban, Douglas MacLean, Henry Shue, Robert Wachbroit, and David Wasserman. I am particularly grateful to two colleagues at the School of Public Policy, with offices neighboring mine on the same floor, Robert H. Nelson and Herman E. Daly, for their patience, kindness, and direction. Bob Nelson labored over an earlier draft to alert me to many errors I would have otherwise committed, and he suggested many arguments I could not have otherwise made. I should also like to thank the Institute administrator, Carroll Linkins, and our graduate assistant, Jillien Dube, who dealt cheerfully and patiently with the secretarial problems I created in writing and revising this manuscript.

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In writing this book I have borrowed, built on, revised, or otherwise worked from several essays published previously. A shorter version of Chapter 1 appeared in *Philosophy & Public Policy Quarterly* 27 (Winter/Spring 2007): 2–7. Chapter 2 borrows from the *Arizona Law Review* 23 (1981): 1281–1298; Chapter 3 draws upon “We Have Met the Enemy and He Is Us or Conflict and Contradiction in Environmental Law,” *Environmental Law* 12 (1982): 283–315; Chapter 4 takes passages from an article that appeared in *Ethics* 96 (1986): 301–316 and includes material from “An Aggregate Measure of What? A Reply to Zerby, Bauman, and Finkle,” *Ecological Economics* 60 (1) (November 2006): 9–13; Chapter 5 draws largely on two publications: “On the Economic Value of Nature’s Services,” *Environmental Values* 17 (1) (February 2008); and “Locke Was Right: Nature Has Little Economic Value,” *Philosophy*

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and Public Policy Quarterly 25 (3) (Summer 2005): 2–11. Chapter 6 revises “Do We Consume Too Much?” *The Atlantic Monthly* 279 (6) (June 1997): 80–96; an earlier version of Chapter 7 appeared as “On the Compatibility of a Conservation Ethic with Biological Science,” *Conservation Biology* 21 (2) (April 2007): 337–345; Chapter 8 relies on material that appeared in “On Preserving the Natural Environment,” *Yale Law Journal* 84 (1974): 205–267; and Chapter 9 contains material from “Settling America or The Concept of Place in Environmental Ethics,” *Journal of Energy, Natural Resources & Environmental Law* 12 (2) (1992): 351–418. A short version of Chapter 10 appeared in *Philosophy & Public Policy Quarterly* 27 (Summer/Fall 2007): 2–9. I am grateful to the editors of these journals for permission to build on these essays.