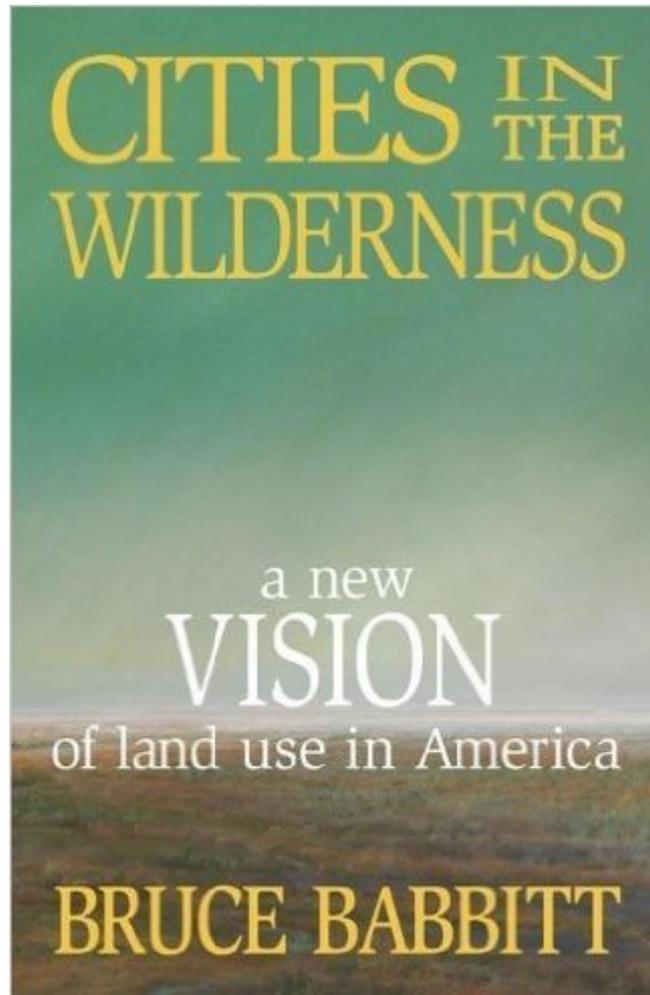


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# Cities In The Wilderness: A New Vision Of Land Use In America



## Synopsis

In this brilliant, gracefully written, and important new book, former Secretary of the Interior and Governor of Arizona Bruce Babbitt brings fresh thought--and fresh air--to questions of how we can build a future we want to live in. We've all experienced America's changing natural landscape as the integrity of our forests, seacoasts, and river valleys succumbs to strip malls, new roads, and subdivisions. Too often, we assume that when land is developed it is forever lost to the natural world--or hope that a patchwork of local conservation strategies can somehow hold up against further large-scale development. In *Cities in the Wilderness*, Bruce Babbitt makes the case for why we need a national vision of land use. We may have a space program, he points out, but here at home we don't have an open-space policy that can balance the needs for human settlement and community with those for preservation of the natural world upon which life depends. Yet such a balance, the author demonstrates, is as remarkably achievable as it is necessary. This is no call for developing a new federal bureaucracy; Babbitt shows instead how much can be--and has been--done by making thoughtful and beneficial use of laws and institutions already in place. A hallmark of the book is the author's ability to match imaginative vision with practical understanding. Babbitt draws on his extensive experience to take us behind the scenes negotiating the Florida Everglades restoration project, the largest ever authorized by Congress. In California, we discover how the Endangered Species Act, still one of the most effective laws governing land use, has been employed to restore regional habitat. In the Midwest, we see how new World Trade Organization regulations might be used to help restore Iowa's farmlands and rivers. As a key architect of many environmental success stories, Babbitt reveals how broad restoration projects have thrived through federal- state partnership and how their principles can be extended to other parts of the country. Whether writing of land use as reflected in the Gettysburg battlefield, the movie *Chinatown*, or in presidential political strategy, Babbitt gives us fresh insight. In this inspiring and informative book, Babbitt sets his lens to panoramic--and offers a vision of land use as grand as the country's natural heritage. --This text refers to an alternate Kindle Edition edition.

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## Customer Reviews

I have just finished reading *Cities in the Wilderness: A New Vision of Land Use in America* (Island Press), a collection of five essays book-ended by a prologue and epilogue by former Arizona governor and Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt. I was initially interested in the book because Babbitt will be the featured interview in the next issue of *Terrain.org: A Journal of the Built & Natural Environments* ([...] due out March 5, 2006. Now, I am utterly fascinated, as it weaves together stories---in the manner of case studies but not nearly as dry---set in a historical context of federal, state, and local government "partnerships," seemingly by chance but more often carefully crafted, for environmental preservation. It's call is simple: There must be a federal presence, in the form of legislation, for large-scale preservation efforts: there must be a federal land use policy. Many of the laws already exist, such as the Endangered Species Act, but a more comprehensive, holistic effort is clearly needed. And such movement cannot wait until the current administration is gone, even if the Bush administration has done more to undo all environmental safeguards than any other presidency in our nation's history. So the topic is intriguing, the stories are powerful, but more so: Babbitt's writing is surprisingly good. Readers at all levels will appreciate and be won over by his subtle eloquence and no-nonsense grace. I'd go so far as to say that this book should be required reading not only for all lawmakers, but for all environmental advocates, property rights advocates, farmers, ranchers, miners, energy developers, and those interested in such: pretty much everyone with a stake or interest in land and water. That should probably be all of us.

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