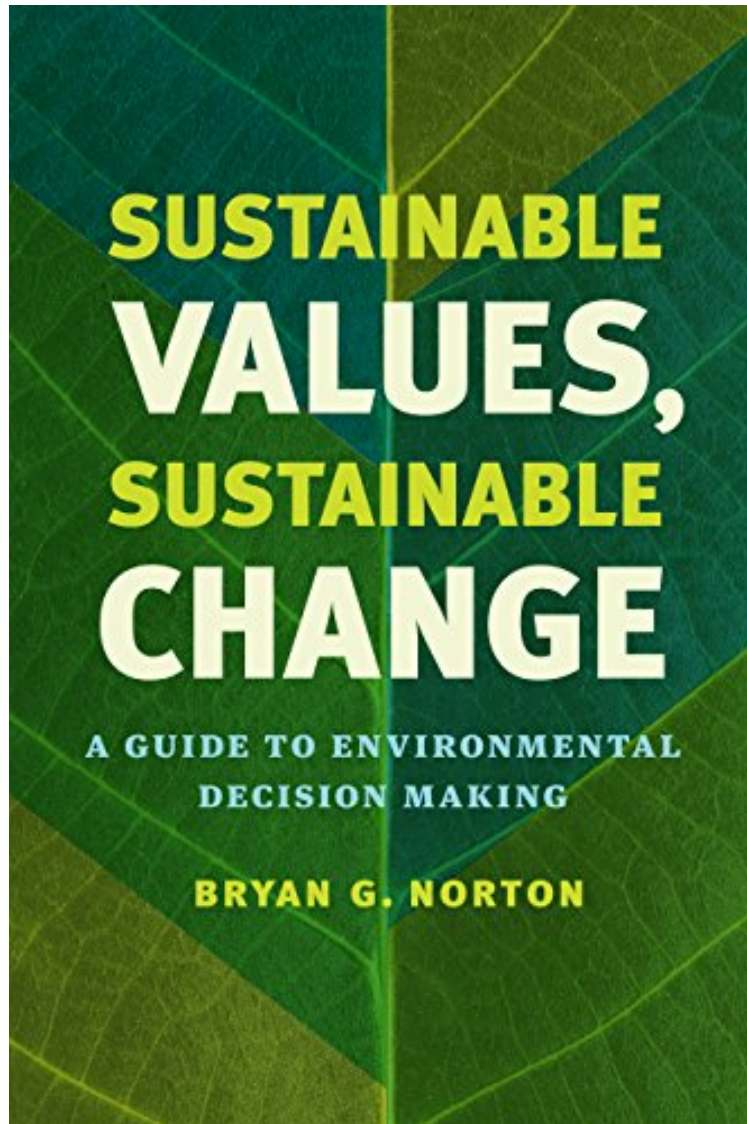


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Sustainable Values, Sustainable Change: A Guide to Environmental Decision Making

Bryan G. Norton

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The best guide available for real environmental decision making By Steven Fesmire I am unaware of a better environmentally-focused volume for building a democratic citizenry. Norton's pragmatist guide to environmental decision making offers an activism for grown-ups, practical tools

and plausible hope for those with the courage and patience to secure, in John Dewey's words, the "democratic means to achieve our democratic ends."

Sustainability is a nearly ubiquitous concept today, but can we ever imagine what it would be like for humans to live sustainably on the earth? No, says Bryan G. Norton in *Sustainable Values, Sustainable Change*. One of the most trafficked terms in the press, on university campuses, and in the corridors of government, sustainability has risen to prominence as a buzzword before the many parties laying claim to it have come close to agreeing how to define it. But the term's political currency urgently demands that we develop an understanding of this elusive concept. While economists, philosophers, and ecologists argue about what in nature is valuable, and why, Norton here offers an action-oriented, pragmatic response to the disconnect between public and academic discourse around sustainability. Looking to the arenas in which decisions are made—and the problems that are driving these decisions—Norton reveals that the path to sustainability cannot be guided by fixed, utopian objectives projected into the future; sustainability will instead be achieved through experimentation, incremental learning, and adaptive management. Drawing inspiration from Aldo Leopold's famed metaphor of "thinking like a mountain" for a spatially explicit, pluralistic approach to evaluating environmental change, Norton replaces theory-dependent definitions with a new decision-making process guided by deliberation and negotiation across science and philosophy, encompassing all stakeholders and activists and seeking to protect as many values as possible. Looking across scales to today's global problems, Norton urges us to learn to think like a planet.

"This book systematically investigates the philosophical foundations of sustainable development in the context of the history of environmental policy. . . . Given the failures and inadequacies of many past policies, Norton proposes effective strategies for sustainable policy choices based on heuristic decision models. Previous environmental quality and sustainable development decision strategies were static and did not accurately achieve the desired outcome. These methods still persist with many policy makers. The author advocates that the optimal process is flexible and taken in small steps that regularly assess progress toward the best outcomes. He also provides strong arguments for a greater amount of pluralistic input in the decision process. Historical and current case studies provide compelling evidence of the author's recommendation. . . . Recommended."