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Book reviews

Ecological Risk Assessment, G.W. Suter II (Ed.), second ed. CRC Press/Taylor & Francis Group, Boca Raton, FL (2007). 671 pp., price: US\$ 99.95, ISBN: 978-1-56670-634-6

In the preface to this book, the author writes: “The primary purpose of preparing this edition is to provide an update.” This update pertains to the field of ecological risk assessment which has “. . . gone from a marginal activity to being a relatively mature practice.” Later in the preface, Suter writes: “This text is still aimed at practitioners and advanced students with at least a basic knowledge of biology, chemistry, mathematics and statistics.”

Although authored mainly by Suter, several chapters written by colleagues have been included in this text which has 39 chapters divided into six major sections entitled as follows:

- Introduction to ecological risk assessment
- Planning and problem formulation
- Analysis and exposure
- Analysis and effects
- Risk management
- The future of ecological risk assessment

The book ends with a 64-page reference section that contains approximately 1300 citations.

Suter discusses a number of processes used to perform ecological risk assessments which William Ruckelshaus, former US EPA administrator, said, “. . . is the product of a shotgun wedding between science and law.” Suter defines the process as “technical support for decision making.” This process is commonly used to regulate chemicals, make decisions regarding the remediation of contaminated sites, the monitor importation of exotic organisms, the manage watersheds and other environmental management issues.

This book “Provides documentation consistent with the EPA framework for ecological risk assessment; explains ERA and presents the full range of useful data, models and conceptual approaches needed to perform active risk assessment; demonstrates how to organize and conduct an ERA; covers conventional risk assessments, risk assessments for existing contamination, large-scale problems, exotic organisms, and risk assessments based on environmental monitoring.”

The book’s final chapter examines the future of ecological risk assessment which is being pushed in new directions by developments in science and changes in policy and public expectations, i.e., a desire for more clarity and specificity in its predictions.

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Corporate Environmental Management, J. Darabaris. CRC Press/Taylor & Francis Group, Boca Raton, FL (2007). 221 pp., Price: US\$ 99.95, ISBN: 978-1-4200-5546-7

This book was written by an engineer who is a Certified Public Accountant. Hence, its emphasis on the overall (business) aspects of a company’s environmental program is understandable. In the first part of the book, Darabaris discusses assessment, while in the second part he provides technical details regarding management and investment concerns. Consequently, “. . . the book offers insight into how to measure the effectiveness of corporate environmental programs.”

This book will be of great assistance to corporate environmental managers whose goals Darabaris notes are threefold:

- “To provide a basis for the independent assessment of environmental management that marries the various standardized approaches for measuring components (e.g., environmental audits for facilities, ISO 14000 compliance) with the larger and more sophisticated goals for overall corporate management objectives.
- To provide summary inputs regarding various global environmental management initiatives and developments that may be of interest to the target audience (with full recognition that this is a moving target).
- To provide technical and management insights and suggestions to aid environmental management professionals and their corporate management structure in their development and implementation of initiatives, as well as providing interested investment and stakeholder communities a basis for independent evaluation.”

In the introduction, the author writes:

“This text focuses on the emerging relationship between corporate management and the environment as a new era arrives on the scene, where environmental factors increasingly play a key role in corporate competition and generate a need for environmental assessments of companies. In this new era, the view of environmental problems has undergone a shift from localized industrial pollution to a broader realization of their collective impact on global environmental problems.”