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The Once and Future Ocean: Notes Toward a New Hydraulic Society

Peter Neill

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Peter Neill's*The Once and Future Ocean* aspires to do nothing less than transform our relationship with the world's most promising and imperiled natural element: the ocean and the inter-connected cycles of water, essential for all aspects of human survival in the 21st century. A successor to Rachael Carson's *The Sea Around Us*, Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac*, and Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth*, *The Once and Future Ocean* is ambitious in scope yet grounded in actionable, specific ideas and solutions for preserving the health of the world ocean. It explores the ocean's impact on climate, fresh water, food, energy, health, security, sustainable development, community living, and cultural traditions. Beginning with a discursive analysis of the most pertinent issues relating to the present condition of both land and sea, Neill provides a persuasive argument for "why the ocean matters" and how its sustainability and careful use, from mountain-top to abyssal plain, can establish a new paradigm for value and social behavior around which to build a new post-industrial, post-consumption global community. This fundamental shift is directed toward the creation of a "new hydraulic society" wherein water in all its cycles and conveyances will determine how we live – from our buildings and cities to the structures of governance by which we succeed in an increasingly populated world.. Neill calls for a new ocean ethic and offers concrete examples of technologies and applications that already exist but have been suppressed by complacency and political subversion financed by exhausted vested interests. *The Once and Future Ocean* offers a bold vision for a practical and possible future, based on a revolutionary paradigm shift that can be implemented through the political will of thousands of citizens of the ocean who understand the necessity for change, the logic of a new moral alternative, and the reality of the consequences if we fail to act in time. *The Once and Future Ocean* relies heavily on the scientific community's contribution to information about the world ocean and is written with a deep familiarity with ocean policy. It is presented as a personal realization -- equally rewarding read in one sitting or in segments -- and is not intended for a limited audience of experts, academics, or policy-makers. Accessible, powerful, persuasive, and lyrical, *The Once and Future Ocean* argues for invention and new solutions, for new answers to fundamental questions, and for a new relationship built around the ocean as a source for new modes of living that are within our grasp if only we have the courage to take hold.

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