



# Inside Passage: A Journey Beyond Borders

*Richard Manning*

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Protecting land in parks, safe from human encroachment, has been a primary strategy of conservationists for the past century and a half. Yet drawing lines around an area and calling it wilderness does little to solve larger environmental problems. As author Richard Manning puts it in a knowingly provocative way: "Wilderness designation is not a victory, but acknowledgement of defeat." In *Inside Passage*, Manning takes us on a thought-provoking tour of the lands along the Pacific Northwest's Inside Passage—from south-east Alaska down through Puget Sound, and then on to the northern Oregon coast and the Columbia River system—as he explores the dichotomy between "wilderness" and "civilisation" and the often disastrous effects of industrialisation. Through vivid description and conversations with people in the region, Manning brings new insights to the area's most pressing environmental concerns—the salmon crisis, deforestation, hydroelectric dams, urban sprawl—and examines various innovative ways they are being addressed. He details efforts to restore degraded ecosystems and to integrate economic development with environmental protection, and looks at powerful new tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) that are increasingly being used to further conservation efforts. Throughout, Manning focuses on the hopeful possibility that we can redesign the human enterprise to a scale more appropriate to the nature that holds it, that rather than drawing borders around nature, we might instead start placing borders on human behaviour. Perhaps, he suggests, we can begin to behave in all places as if all places matter to us as much as wilderness, and, in the process, claim all of nature as our own. *Inside Passage* is a wide-ranging and thoughtful exploration by a gifted writer, and an important work for anyone interested in the Pacific Northwest, or concerned about the future of our relationship to the natural world.

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