
The fact that recurring disturbances of various types are a key element in the ecology of most vegetation types in North America was relegated to the dark corners of the discipline for much of the 20th century. Indeed, prior to 1970 precious few individuals had broken free from the shackles of the Clementsian organismic and monoclimax dogma to recognize that disturbances impact the pattern and process of vegetation at almost all levels and scales. This is why a new book by Lee Frelich from the University of Minnesota is an important addition to our understanding of forest dynamics and disturbance regimes. As far as I am aware, Frelich has spent his entire professional career in the Lake States, which includes Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. He has had the good fortune of training and working with some of the most respected ecologists of our times—Craig Lorimer and Jim Bockheim and at the University of Wisconsin, and Margaret Davis and Peter Reich at the University of Minnesota. Therefore, it is not surprising that this book is a high quality treatment of disturbance ecology in the evergreen and some, but not all, of the deciduous forest of the Lakes States region. The major themes in the book are: (1) the influence of natural disturbance factors, particularly wind, fire, and herbivory, on forest composition, structure, dynamics, and succession; (2) pattern and mechanism of coexistence between evergreen and hardwood tree species in relation to disturbance; and (3) the