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Environmental Planning for Oceans and Coasts: Methods, Tools, and Technologies

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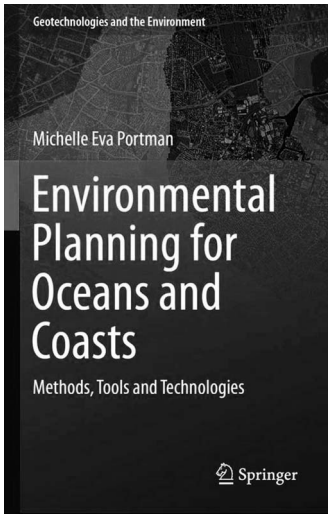
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BOOK REVIEWS

Portman, M.E., 2016. *Environmental Planning for Oceans and Coasts: Methods, Tools, and Technologies*. Springer International Publishing, 237p., 48 illustrations (40 color). ISBN: 978-3-319-26971-9 (ebook), 978-3-319-26969-6 (hardcover). $129.00 eBook; $169.99 hardcover.



In this book, Michelle Portman took on a huge challenge: to write comprehensibly and intelligibly about the vastly complex topic of Planning for Oceans and Coasts. In my view, she did a great job. Here's why:

This book constitutes, first and foremost, a hands-on manual with practical suggestions on how to achieve an integrated view to the planning of oceans and coasts and how to overturn the traditional mindset and administrative divide that considers the oceans on one side and coasts on the other. The book is directly intended for practitioners, with a particular focus on planners, recognizing and addressing the huge challenges they face today: the specificities of planning for a three-dimensional, dynamic, and ever changing environment, of which we know very little, and increasingly imbalanced as a result of human activities and their consequences, such as climate change.

She addresses the main/key aspects necessary for a comprehensive view of the issue: from our current understanding of the ocean and coasts, to the applicable international policy and legal framework, while drawing attention to the benefits of integrated approaches such as Marine Spatial Planning, and to the challenges of bringing ecosystem services into the equation. Recognizing the vital link between data, information, knowledge, and action, she even dedicates a full chapter to the topic of communication—a critical, yet often neglected, aspect of the planner's job.

Michelle Portman leaves no reader behind: she carefully introduces every major concept, offering clear definitions and, often, a brief history of how given concepts or practices evolved, providing readers with a clearer grasp of why and how we got to where we are. As such, it is also ideally suited for students.

But perhaps the most distinctive feature of this book, and, in my view, its most remarkable one, is that beyond presenting neat (seemingly "ready-made") solutions or recipes, it constantly questions and challenges the reader: what is our role, and our responsibility, as planners and as citizens, in contributing to the planning and sustainable development of oceans and coasts in the Anthropocene?

In this book, Michelle Portman shares with us her vast knowledge and expertise on the subject and offers us a diverse toolbox of techniques and approaches to the integrated planning of oceans and coasts toward sustainability. In so doing, she challenges us to assume our responsibility, both as professionals and as citizens, engaging the best of ourselves in tackling this enormous task. It is everything that a book of this type ought to be!

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