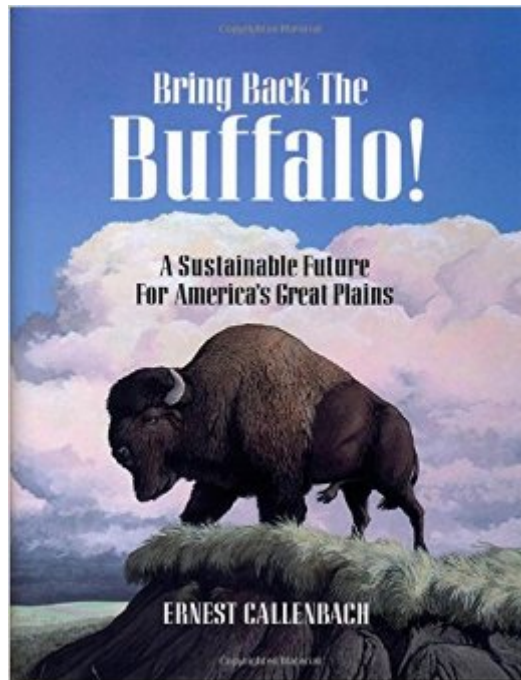


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Bring Back The Buffalo!: A Sustainable Future For America's Great Plains



Synopsis

In *Bring Back the Buffalo!*, Ernest Callenbach argues that the return of the bison is the key to a sustainable future for the Great Plains. Vast stretches of the region have seen a steady decline in population and are ill-suited for traditional agriculture or cattle ranching. Yet those same areas provide ideal habitat for bison. Callenbach explores the past history, present situation, and future potential of bison in North America as he examines what can and should be done to re-establish bison as a significant presence in the American landscape. He looks forward with high hopes to a time when vast herds of buffalo provide permanent sustenance to the rural inhabitants of the Great Plains and again play a central role in the balance of nature.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The western plains of the US are witnessing an impressive boom in the growth of ghost towns (6,000 just in Kansas). Lands having less than two people per square mile are classified as frontier. In the 1990 census, 133 western counties were frontier. The area of these counties is one quarter of the land in the lower 48 states (excluding Alaska and Hawaii). The population of the plains peaked in 1920, and has been declining since. An area that once may have supported 25,000 Indian buffalo hunters now supports 10,000 Americans. The population is aging, because young folks tend to leave, and there is little to attract newcomers. Ernest Callenbach, the author of *Ecotopia*, is a green dreamer. His book, *Bring Back the Buffalo*, presents us with a vision for healing the plains. For 500 years, the European invaders have done an impressive job of ravaging America's ecosystems, but

the plains are less wrecked than the rest of the nation. Therefore, the plains would be the easiest region to return to a genuinely sustainable way of life. So, what are we waiting for? Well, more than a few folks have little affection for green dreamers. The plains are home to God-fearing, government hating, ultra-conservatives. Yet the economy of the region is kept on life support via a golden shower of generous government subsidies (welfare!). Only fools with high principles question this paradox, and they are promptly bounced out of the saloon. The government pays farmers not to till 26 million acres (10.5m ha) of highly erodible land. In North Dakota, 80 percent of net farm income comes from subsidies. Dry climate trends have been limiting farm productivity, and irrigated farming is on a dead end road, because underground aquifers are in the process of being emptied.

To begin with, i haven't read this book. But the idea seems to me great. Bringing buffalos to the plains will start a new period in the life of America, only we'll have to bring indians too. They would live quietly though loudly, producing some kind of energy which was always here, and which otherways is dissolving into Nowhere. This energy is necessary for generating life all over America. Joseph Campbell tells an interesting story about how buffalos interchanged with indians in the process of buffalo-hunt. They (buffalos) said they are not against hunting them in general, but they must be asked to and treated politely. Anyway all this play is inevitable, they said (indians used to follow them to the end of the rock and made them jump into the precipice) You must only find a suitable form. Another, more human and beautiful attitude we see in the film "Bless the beasts and the children", but this is a kind of unfair play from the side of the bad guys that we see there. Anyway, America must return to It's roots, the only question is where and what these roots are? perhaps this returning is going on somewhere without us, humans, and this is for better because we would spoil everything, even the ecologists? And this process is wild and strong? And it is expressed in our personal mythologies? I had written about the russian-american connections(i am a Russian originally) as the connections of the Bear and the Buffalo, both of them are beautifully and roughly strong, but they differ very much in their behaviour. So i think they would not fight, when they meet, imagine what they would do? Bear had a strong hand, Buffalo a strong foot...no, it's hard to imagine. Dance perhaps? Do circus?

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