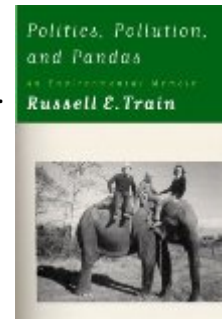


Russell E. Train. *Politics, Pollution and Pandas: An Environmental Memoir.*

Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2003. xiii + 376 pp. \$28.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-55963-286-7.



Reviewed by Brooks Flippen

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Russell Train has been a leading environmentalist for the last half century. After founding the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, he led the Conservation Foundation and helped establish an American affiliate of the World Wildlife Fund. He was the first chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality and the second administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. As such, he played a critical role in the formation of modern American environmental law, including such legislation as the National Environmental Policy Act. Recently retired, he led the World Wildlife Fund for over two decades, a period of monumental accomplishment and tremendous expansion. Now, with this book, Train recalls his long career. It is a fascinating insider tale of Washington and the shifting sands of environmental politics.

Train devotes little time to his youth and does not provide much insight on why a successful tax judge suddenly shifted careers to become a full-time conservationist. An African safari prompted an interest in wildlife, but Train recounts events without much self-analysis. He explains his evolution from a traditional conservationist to a mod-

ern, ecological-minded environmentalist in more detail. Much of this book jumps from one environmental battle to another in a rather disjointed fashion, although Train is a lively writer and frequently explains complex scientific issues in a way the general reader can understand. Train couches himself as a moderate Republican, an old-school Washingtonian who valued bipartisanship and compromise. Civility and pragmatism made significant progress possible during the early years, with Train's pride in the accomplishments of the Republican Party obvious. Equally obvious, however, is his frustration at the ascendancy of the newer, more ideologically driven conservative. Like Christine Todd Whitman's recent book, Train bemoans the direction of his own party. Interspersed with discussions of past events are the occasional jabs at the presidency of George W. Bush. The future, Train clearly believes, is tenuous.

Train devotes the last third of the book to the World Wildlife Fund, including lengthy discussions of its various programs. He calls for sustainable development in noting such events as the

WWF's National Commission on the Environment. Throughout it all, Train recounts his travels, having ventured to every continent. In the end, he calls for an "Eleventh Commandment," the need for the human race to see itself as part of an interdependent whole.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the book is his descriptions of the various politicians and environmentalists. Train personally met every president since Herbert Hoover and visited the White House frequently. He offers little criticism of environmental groups, although he acknowledges the frustration of advocates such as David Brower with his brand of moderate environmentalism.

The biggest failure of the book is a lack of context. Train's discussion of the trees perhaps misses some of the forest. There is almost no discussion of broader public attitudes and the evolution of environmentalism. He does not tie his focus into the other events of the day. In addition, his mixture of chronological and topical organization can be confusing at times. Nevertheless, this book provides new insights on important events. It constitutes a strong addition to the literature.

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