

Introduction



Jeffrey M. Perloff and Cyndi S. Berck

Peter Berck was born on April 26, 1950, and died on August 10, 2018. He thoroughly enjoyed his life, work, family, and friends. He was married twice and had three children and four grandchildren. He was a passionate outdoorsman and an enthusiastic world traveler.

Peter grew up in suburban New York and attended Great Neck North High School, where he was Editor-in-chief of the student newspaper. After two years at Stonybrook University of New York, he moved to California to complete his bachelor's degree in math and economics at the University of California, Berkeley. He completed his economics Ph.D. at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1976 and then spent his academic career of 42 years on the faculty of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, College of Natural Resources, at U.C. Berkeley.

Peter's dissertation, supervised by Bob Solow, revolutionized forestry economics. It introduced the formal study of the management of timber harvesting on public lands. Peter was the world's foremost expert on forestry economics. He served as an expert witness for the United States during the expansion of California's Redwood National Park by eminent domain. He became the S.J. Hall Professor of Forestry and was delighted to become a professor of forestry as well as economics. The late Karl-Gustav Löfgren, in his book *The Economics of Forestry and Natural Resources* (New York and Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), inscribed Peter's copy "to Peter, who opened the road."

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Peter's impacts on California's environmental policy were extensive. One of his most satisfying projects was modeling the economy-wide effects of California's landmark greenhouse gas initiative. Using tools he'd developed for more general use by the California Department of Finance, his "Environmental Dynamic Revenue Accounting Model" assessed the long-run effects on households and firms from reduced energy costs due to climate policies.

Peter also became involved in development economics and international research. He served on a binational agricultural research board between the United States and Israel. During a sabbatical in Sweden, Peter was recruited as an international research associate with a sustainable development initiative called Environment for Development.

Peter was as invested in being a teacher and a mentor as a researcher. In addition to his undergraduate and graduate students, he worked as a Scout leader, creating an environmental education program. As a faculty member, he led an environmental-education theme house. As a member of the Academic Senate, Peter chaired the committee that established the "10th UC campus," UC Merced, always focusing on what would be best for students.

Some senior researchers find their undergraduate teaching obligations burdensome. Peter loved teaching the introductory class in environmental economics. "Good professors teach well," noted one of his students in a nominating letter for the Distinguished Teaching Award, which Peter received in 2018. "Great professors, however, create new professors." Peter called his graduate students his "academic children." He was a thesis advisor or faculty advisor to many of the contributors to this book.

At the end of his life, Peter talked with us about holding a conference to give his many students and colleagues a chance to share their intellectual achievements. This book presents their contributions to Peter's fields of research. His primary field of forestry economics is addressed in Part I. His environmental research covered agriculture and fisheries (Part II), conservation and development (Part III), and energy and recycling (Part IV).

We hope that this volume will introduce the reader to some of the many ideas generated by Peter and his students and colleagues.

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