Coastal Governance

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COASTAL GOVERNANCE

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To Nancy
Thank you

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Preface

Most coastal policy issues start with debates about changes in the natural environment. However, ultimately the discussions revolve around the values people share and the actions they take. People affect flows of materials and energy while their actions determine populations of organisms and the state of biological systems. Individuals are the ultimate ecosystem change agents—particularly if unfettered. Conversely, their behavior, if channeled, can produce social and natural systems that deliver many of the values society seeks. Therefore, an understanding of the policy process and its application in coastal settings can make substantial contributions to practical problem solving in coastal lands and seas.

An introductory text must address the fact that effective coastal management requires integration of information across many human endeavors and that individuals usually focus on just one discipline pertinent to the topic. Furthermore, the text should recognize that institutional change, which improves the match among human activities and environmental limits, underlies contemporary discussions of coastal governance. Some students bring great enthusiasm about the importance of coasts and a substantial knowledge of the natural sciences. However, they may not have studied the policy process and can be frustrated by the seeming inability of discussions about governance to reflect the natural sciences. Other students are familiar with human dimensions and governmental processes but not comfortable with the underlying natural science pertinent to governance options and their operation.

To meet the needs of both of these groups of students, as well as professionals and interested citizens, this book identifies coastal problems, explains the policy process as a means of addressing them, and demonstrates where and how natural science can assist. It introduces how the

policy process works both as an ideal and in actual practice. By delving into specific cases such as wastewater, oil, wetlands, watersheds, and fisheries, chapters ground the presentation in laws and agencies that operate in coastal lands and seas. Readers will observe firsthand the forces at play as sector-based, spatial, and ecosystem-based management are applied to specific problems, evaluated, and revised. By focusing on underlying processes, the text equips students to respond to inevitable changes that will arise as governance evolves to meet the needs and values of the increasing numbers of people who live in coastal areas. I owe a great debt to colleagues and students who have explored these topics with me, as well as the many individuals at Island Press who have helped to bring this book to fruition. The project started through the encouragement of James Gustave Speth during my sabbatical visit to the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies at Yale University. Those students for whom this material resonates have been a great inspiration through their observations and questions in class discussions, the papers and articles they write, and, most important, through the careers they lead in coastal management. Erin Jackson and Changhua Weng, graduate assistants at the University of Rhode Island, assembled key information in support of the book. Island Press provided the results from anonymous reviews of the material, which were very helpful in shaping the text. Emily Davis, the editor at Island Press, suggested changes in text and presentation that have been particularly helpful. Gaboury Benoit, Tracey Dalton, Lawrence Juda, Seth Macinko, and Robert Thompson contributed their time and insights by very thoughtfully reviewing separate chapters. The remaining omissions are the responsibility of the author alone.

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