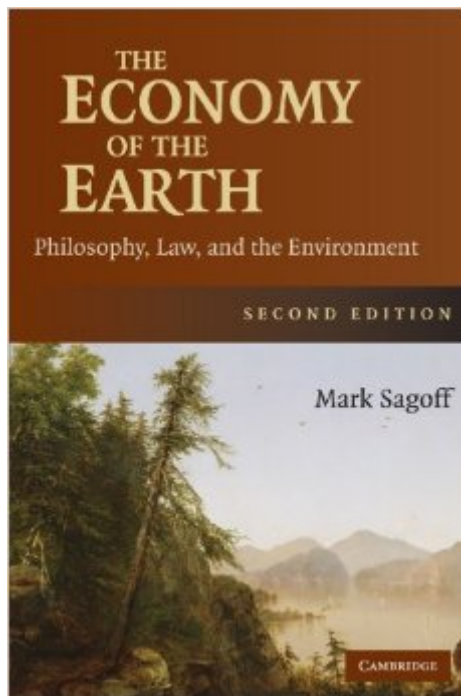


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# The Economy Of The Earth: Philosophy, Law, And The Environment (Cambridge Studies In Philosophy And Public Policy)



## Synopsis

Mark Sagoff draws on the last twenty years of debate over the foundations of environmentalism in this comprehensive revision of *The Economy of the Earth*. Posing questions pertinent to consumption, cost-benefit analysis, the normative implications of neo-Darwinism, the role of the natural in national history, and the centrality of the concept of place in environmental ethics, he analyzes social policy in relation to the environment, pollution, the workplace, and public safety and health. Sagoff distinguishes ethical from economic questions and explains which kinds of concepts, arguments, and processes are appropriate to each.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In *The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, c. 1988), Mark Sagoff urges us to develop stronger ethical and legal norms so as to preserve the environment through social regulation. Taking issue with those who would reduce all environmental issues to economics and its concern for commodities and profit/loss data, he argues "that these problems are primarily moral, aesthetic, cultural, and political and that they must be addressed in those terms" (p. 6). Those who mindlessly espouse the notion that "you can't legislate morality" might as well close Sagoff's book at page six, for that's exactly what he thinks we must do! Central to his endeavor is the task of dislodging "cost-benefit analysis" from the center of policy-making, law-shaping endeavors. Surely there are goods and services, entities and experiences, which cannot be measured by or reduced to dollars and cents! And surely such things have intrinsic worth which transcends personal preferences. To establish moral and legal weight for

intangibles such as community bonds or scenic beauties, and to discover objective criteria for allegedly subjective moral judgments, is Sagoff's task. He does so, in part, because once "we accept the theory that values are subjective, that they are just 'wants,' we must also accept the idea that managers--whether they be therapists, lawyers, or cost-benefit analysts--are in the best position to handle them for us. We must also accept the idea that we all want the same thing, namely, the satisfaction of as many preferences as possible, taking their intensity into account" (p. 48). Sagoff rejects such utilitarianism because it so easily allows the welfare state to function with little regard for anything but physiological/economic concerns.

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