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Making Sense of Intractable Environmental Conflicts: Concepts and Cases

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Despite a vast amount of effort and expertise devoted to them, many environmental conflicts have remained mired in controversy, stubbornly defying resolution. Why can some environmental problems be resolved in one locale but remain contentious in another, often carrying on for decades? What is it about certain issues or the people involved that make a conflict seemingly insoluble.*Making Sense of Intractable Environmental Conflicts* addresses those and related questions, examining what researchers and experts in the field characterize as "intractable" disputes—intense disputes that persist over long periods of time and cannot be resolved through consensus-building efforts or by administrative, legal, or political means. The approach focuses on the "frames" parties use to define and enact the dispute&#8212the lenses through which they interpret and understand the conflict and critical conflict dynamics. Through analysis of interviews, news media coverage, meeting transcripts, and archival data, the contributors to the book:examine the concepts of frames, framing, and reframing, and the role that framing plays in conflictsoutline the essential characteristics of intractability and its major causesoffer case studies of eight intractable environmental conflictspresent a rich body of original interview material from affected partiesset forth recommendations for intervention that can help resolve disputesWithin each case chapter, the authors describe the historical development and fundamental nature of the conflict and then analyze the case from the perspective of the key frames that are integral to understanding the dynamics of the dispute. They also offer cross-case analyses of related conflicts.Conflicts examined include those over natural resource use, toxic pollutants, water quality, and growth. Specific conflicts examined are the Quincy Library Group in California; Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota; Edwards Aquifer in Texas; Doan Brook in Cleveland, Ohio; the Antidegradation Environmental Advisory Group in Ohio; Drake Chemical in Pennsylvania; Alton Park/Piney Woods in Tennessee; and three examples of growth-related conflicts along the Front Range of Colorado's Rocky Mountains.

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