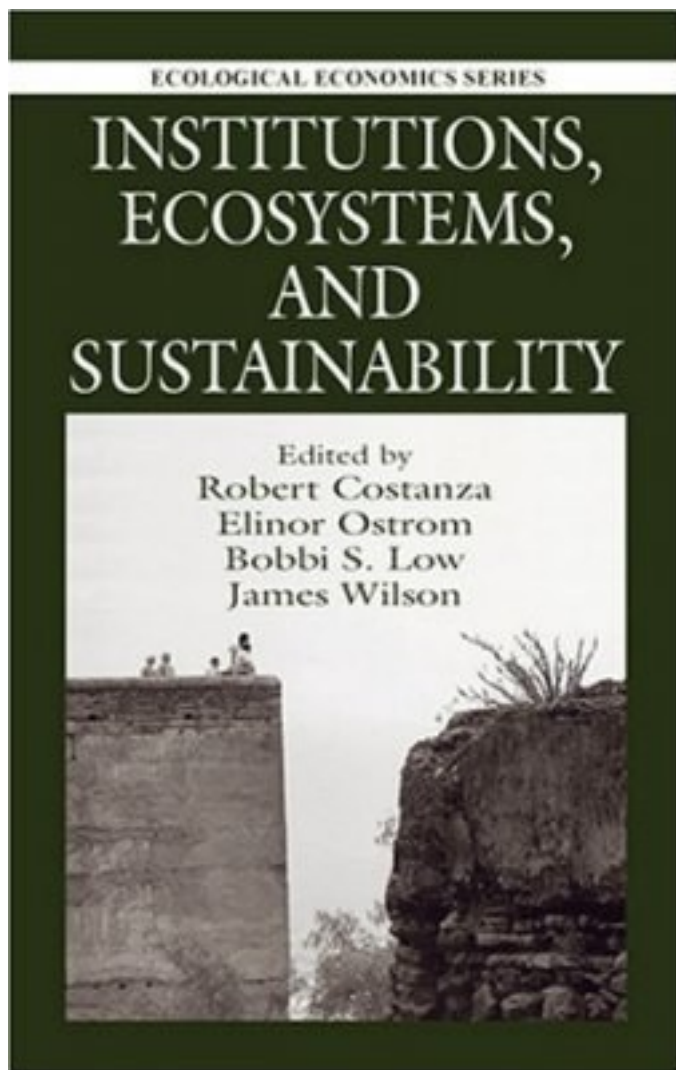


# Institutions, Ecosystems, and Sustainability



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In the latter part of the 20th century, humans are doing a particularly poor job of managing natural resources in a sustainable way over the long term. Institutions, Ecosystems, and Sustainability focuses on long-term, sustainable natural resource management practices at the local, national, and international levels. The authors suggest that a major cause of the "sustainability problem" - regulatory policies for large areas that often threaten the sustainability of both natural resources and previously effective governance problems - lie in "scale" problems. Large scale ecosystems are not simply larger versions of smaller systems, and micro-scale ecosystems are not merely microcosms of large scale systems. The driving forces and feedback mechanisms operate at different levels and exhibit distinct patterns of their own. Traditional management practices that do well at the local level cannot be expected to do equally well in handling activities organized at the continental or global scale. Even more importantly, when local systems are superseded by national or international management practices, local ecosystems frequently suffer. The challenge is to match ecosystems and governance systems in ways that maximize the compatibility of these systems. This book builds upon this fundamental principle. Particularly valuable is the use of simulation exercises to explore the consequences of social institutions and a discussion of the progress being made in developing a broad global data base to test hypothesis about the relationship between ecosystems and social institutions, and to investigate ways to repair the damage already caused by scale mismatches.

作者介绍:

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