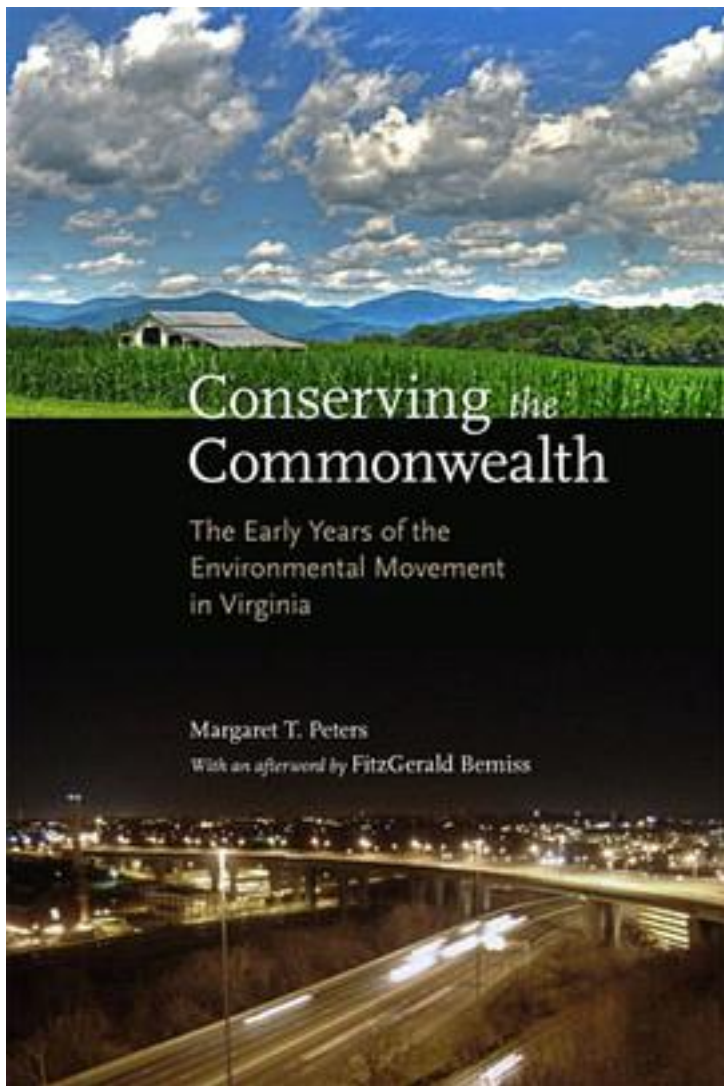


Conserving the Commonwealth



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"Conserving the Commonwealth" is the book that anyone interested in conservation and environmental issues has been waiting for. This history describes the earliest days of Virginia's environmental movement, recounting the efforts of a farsighted group of leaders to preserve Virginia's priceless resources--open land, waterways, and historic sites--and to create new parks within reach of all the state's citizens. In 1965, Governor Albertis Harrison selected State Senator FitzGerald Bemiss to chair a commission--the Virginia Outdoor Recreation Study Commission--to make recommendations for improving the state's outdoor recreation facilities. Inspired by Bemiss's leadership and a newly awakened concern for the environment, the commission reached far beyond its mandate, addressing the entire range of the Commonwealth's natural and man-made resources: open land, pristine waterways, and historic buildings. The result was "Virginia's Common Wealth," a publication that inspired the environmental movement for the balance of the twentieth century and served as the framework for Virginia's public efforts to conserve its natural and historic resources. Bemiss gained powerful advocates for Virginia's environment in governors Linwood Holton and Gerald L. Baliles, delegate Tayloe Murphy, attorney George Freeman, and law professor A. E. Dick Howard. Beyond the public administrative and legal history of governmental environmental efforts, "Conserving the Commonwealth" recounts the efforts of private groups such as the Virginia chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the Piedmont Environmental Council, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and the APVA Preservation Virginia, which all fought valiantly to preserve Virginia's fragile open spaces and irreplaceable historic sites and buildings. The book also points out that in spite of all those early efforts, the state of Virginia's environmental health today is deeply threatened. In his afterword, FitzGerald Bemiss reflects on the continuing need for regional planning, an efficient public transportation system, and funding for existing programs. Three appendices provide tabular information on Virginia's state parks and conservation easements, and include the text of a 1965 article by FitzGerald Bemiss on urban political needs. The book will be of interest to planners, environmentalists, and preservationists, and to all who care about preserving Virginia's natural resources.

作者介绍:

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