



Treading Softly: Paths to Ecological Order (MIT Press)

Thomas Princen

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We are living beyond our means, running up debts both economic and ecological, consuming the planet's resources at rates not remotely sustainable. But it's hard to imagine a different way. How can we live without cheap goods and easy credit? How can we consume without consuming the systems that support life? How can we live well and live within our means? In *Treading Softly*, Thomas Princen helps us imagine an alternative. We need, he says, a new normal, an ecological order that is actually economical with resources, that embraces limits, that sees sustainable living not as a "lifestyle" but as a long-term connection to fresh, free-flowing water, fertile soil, and healthy food. The goal would be to live well by living well within the capacities of our resources. Princen doesn't offer a quick fix -- there's no list of easy ways to save the planet to hang on the refrigerator. He gives us instead a positive, realistic sense of the possible, with an abundance of examples, concepts, and tools for imagining, then realizing, how to live within our biophysical means.

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