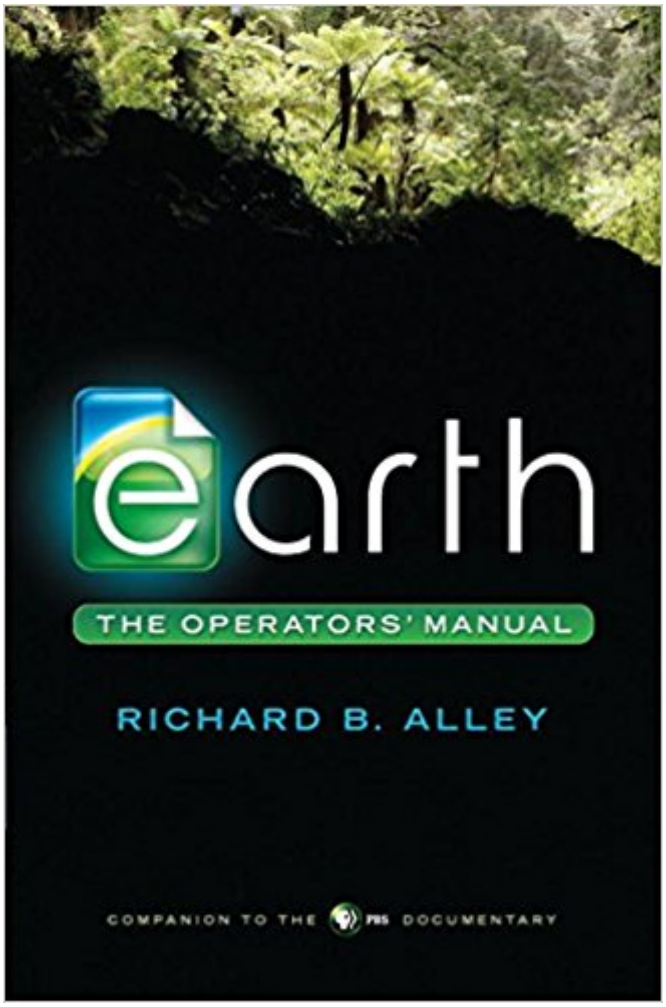
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Earth: The Operators' Manual



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Synopsis

The bookÃ¢â ¬â ¢companion to a PBS seriesÃ¢â ¬â ¢that proves humans are causing global warming and offers a path to the future. Since the discovery of fire, humans have been energy users and always will be. And this is a good thing-our mastery of energy is what separates us from the rest of the animal kingdom and has allowed us to be the dominant species on the planet. However, this mastery comes with a price: we are changing our environment in a profoundly negative way by heating it up. Using one engaging story after another, coupled with accessible scientific facts, world authority Richard B. Alley explores the fascinating history of energy use by humans over the centuries, gives a doubt-destroying proof that already-high levels of carbon dioxide are causing damaging global warming, and surveys the alternative energy options that are available to exploit right now. These new energy sources might well be the engines for economic growth in the twenty-first century. 50 black-and-white photographs

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this companion book to the PBS television series of the same name, Alley, a Penn State professor of geology who served as a member of the U.N. climate change committee, presents a primer on combatting global warming. The book begins with a history of how fuel-from trees, whale oil, and petroleum-has been instrumental to civilization and how we tend to exhaust our sources. He goes on to explain how scientists study climate change and why the evidence is convincing, and ends with a call to action and an overview of possible solutions. Laden with professorial jokes,

unexpected similes (studying climate change is like watching kindergarten soccer; stabilizing the atmosphere is comparable to sewage treatment), photos of the author's daughters, and exhaustive responses that should demolish any and all misinformation about global warming circulating around the U.S., this optimistic book ought to convince even the most obstinate climate-change denier. (Apr.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

Ã¢â ¬Å“Starred Review. Alley thoroughly explains the dynamics of global warming and its negative consequences, and parses the economic benefits of renewable energy. He also forthrightly addresses Ã¢â ¬ËœClimategate,Ã¢â ¬â„¢ the politicization of science, and common misperceptions that stoke skepticism about what he convincingly demonstrates is the Ã¢â ¬Ëœsolid scienceÃ¢â ¬â„¢ of global warming. Alley concludes with suggestions for a Ã¢â ¬Ëœmeasured transitionÃ¢â ¬â„¢ to a combination of wind, solar, sea, and geothermal power. AlleyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s lively and positive Earth Ã¢â ¬Ëœoperating manualÃ¢â ¬â„¢ is the substantial companion book for a new PBS series that will air in April to mark Earth Day.Ã¢â ¬Â• - BooklistÃ¢â ¬Å“This optimistic book ought to convince even the most obstinate climate-change denier.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Publishers Weekly

Richard Alley is a climate scientist. While many may not have heard of him before, some will have seen him give a demonstration of the Earth's tilt (and its relationship to climate change) in a House hearing last year. Using his head, with his bald spot representing the North Pole, Alley schooled Republican Rep. Rohrabacher on historical climate science. Alley uses the same humor and adroitness of analogy in Earth: The Operators' Manual to give us an engaging look at our planet, the changes that are occurring, and options for moving forward.The book is a companion to a PBS documentary, which I haven't seen but plan to do so after reading this book. The book is divided in to three parts totaling 24 chapters. The first part gives us a glimpse at how we have used energy over the millennia, how we have impacted the planet, and how we have moved from "peak trees" to "peak whale oil" to eventually (or even already), "peak fossil fuels." The second part gives us a dozen chapters that make it clear that human activity is changing our climate. The third part focuses on options for non-fossil fuel energy sources.Throughout, Alley's whimsical side shows through, as does the ease at which he can communicate the science with apt analogies that all of us can understand. Who knew that climate was a bit like watching a kindergarten soccer game? With climate, many factors appear to be kicking around randomly but then, eventually, there seems to be an order to the chaos. As Alley takes us through the science it becomes undeniably clear that we

are warming our planet.While the first two sections may be the most entertaining, the final section is probably the most important part of the book. Alley examines "the road to ten billion smiling people," that is, the options we have to providing energy for our ever-growing global population. Starting with toilets (I kid you not), he discusses the smart grid, solar and wind solutions, and pretty much everything else from hydroelectric to nuclear to geo-engineering. Some seem more promising than others, and Alley largely believes that some combination of renewable energy sources are the likely future.Overall, I found the book interesting and definitely informative. It’s a worthy read for anyone interested in the topic.

This was a recommended supplemental book for one of my Environmental Science courses. While it was written a little while ago, it is a good introduction to those who may not understand the effect that humans have had on shaping the Earth and the problems that we are currently facing with climate change. It’s definitely a good read for those who want to start at the beginning and learn about the global warming crises.

A book that should be a requirement for any human who wishes to reside on the planet. If people only knew the reality of what we are currently doing to our only home, change would come quickly. Unfortunately most of us just haven’t taken the time. This book is a great place to start for everyone who wants information about what homosapiens are doing to their home and what can be done to change the otherwise dismal outcome of a business as usual approach.

This book was recommended by Dr. Thompson of Ohio State University’s ICE research department, after a public lecture. I had asked for help trying to assist climate change deniers. I bought two copies of the book as well as the eBook (Kindle) version. The reports I am getting back on the book are favorable. My own experience with the eBook is excellent. I am not finished yet, but every word seems appropriate to me as I follow the discussion. (th)

Should be required reading for everyone. We will all be affected by the coming changes in our climate. Dr. Alley presents his case step by step using only documented facts and labeling any conjecture as such. He presents reasonable solutions not unrealistic hogwash. I dare anyone who reads this book to continue harboring doubts about climate change being real and an immediate problem.

This book has some really cool history on our human impact, mixed with musings from the author's personal life.

Excellent. Read this as part of our class assignment

Dr. Alley provides a sucinct and compelling overview of the current state of our knowledge of the Earth's climate. The book is non-idiological and th author utilizes discrete real-world examples to illustrate his points. This is a good book for a text for an undergraduate sustainability course, or for the genera public interested in a well balanced review of climate sciece.

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