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WHAT OTHERS HAVE TO SAY:

“[This book] urges us toward a sustainable use of our environment... Through science, art, and the poet’s words, [this book] urges us toward a sustainable use of our environment.”—Gretchen C. Daily, coauthor of The Biophilia Hypothesis

“This book reveals hard facts, challenges simple assumptions, and transforms Alaska from a wistful idea to a real place with its own changing ecology, economies, society, and values. It includes essays by the group of scientists, writers, and artists who made an expedition to Alaska in 2001, tracing the historic route of railroad baron Edward H. Harriman’s ambitious journey in 1899. Together, the group visited the diverse cultures, communities, and ecosystems of Alaska. In their accounts, the modern explorers share their conversations with mayors, teachers, tribal leaders and elders, children, business owners, and conservationists in order to present Alaska as they discovered it, and not simply as a fantasy on airport posters or in tourism brochures.”—Deborah Williams, executive director, Alaska Conservation Foundation

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“This is a profoundly perceptive and beautifully written book that sheds tremendous insights on Alaska and is a must-read for anyone who wants a deeper, richer understanding of America’s last frontier.”—Deborah Williams, executive director, Alaska Conservation Foundation

“A guide to America’s soul, the boundless beauty of Alaska, and the ways in which people have related to it over the years, this book should be of interest to a very wide readership.”—Peter H. Raven, Missouri Botanical Garden

“A fitting and fascinating capstone for a remarkable sequel to an extraordinary adventure.”—Maury Klein, creator and 2001 expedition leader. At Smith College, he is the director of the Clark Science Center and founding director for their Environmental Science and Policy Program. Litwin is also an Aldo Leopold Fellow, who has published numerous papers on conservation biology and holds a Ph.D. in wildlife ecology and policy from Cornell University.

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HARRIMAN ALASKA EXPEDITION RETRACED

A CENTURY OF CHANGE, 1899–2001

Edited by Thomas S. Litwin

Foreword by David Rockefeller, Jr.

Over time, Alaska has become synonymous with the idea of wilderness—nature, free and unspoiled. Yet while the concept of this open, untamed landscape—the “land of the midnight sun”—has a romantic appeal, the reality is quite different and often much more severe. Alaska is a place where communities can be isolated, winters are long, and temperatures can freeze flesh rock hard in minutes. This book reveals hard facts, challenges simple assumptions, and transforms Alaska from a wistful idea to a real place with its own changing ecology, economies, society, and values. It includes essays by the group of scientists, writers, and artists who made an expedition to Alaska in 2001, tracing the historic route of railroad baron Edward H. Harriman’s ambitious journey in 1899. Together, the group visited the diverse cultures, communities, and ecosystems of Alaska. In their accounts, the modern explorers share their conversations with mayors, teachers, tribal leaders and elders, children, business owners, and conservationists in order to present Alaska as they discovered it, and not simply as a fantasy on airport posters or in tourism brochures.

Organized by the ship’s route with expedition logs providing a sense of place, the book addresses wilderness conservation biology and ecology, American history, natural history and anthropology, and travel and exploration. More specific topics include the repatriation of Native objects; tourism; forestry, fisheries, and marine mammals; John Muir’s notion of beauty; the effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill on Prince William Sound; the legacy of Russian exploration; Alaska’s glacial geography; the challenges faced by isolated communities living in harsh frontier environments; whale, salmon, seal, and seabird ecology; and possibilities for a sustainable future in Alaska. Lavishly illustrated with gorgeous color and black-and-white photographs, The Harriman Alaska Expedition Retraced is an ambitious exploration of America’s northern wilderness, which we discover is far from frozen in time.

Thomas S. Litwin is the Harriman Expedition Retraced creator and 2001 expedition leader. At Smith College, he is the director of the Clark Science Center and founding director for their Environmental Science and Policy Program. Litwin is also an Aldo Leopold Fellow, who has published numerous papers on conservation biology and holds a Ph.D. in wildlife ecology and policy from Cornell University.


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“With heart and soul, The Harriman Alaska Expedition Retraced both helps us see the beauty of the earth’s ecosystems and confronts the difficult realities surrounding their use. . . . Through science, art, and the poet’s words, [this book] urges us toward a sustainable use of our environment.”—Gretchen C. Daily, coauthor The New Economy of Nature

“The Harriman Alaska Expedition Retraced takes us across 100 years of Alaskan and American history, showing us the magnificence and vulnerability of our vast wilderness coastline.”—Jay Hammond, governor of Alaska, 1974–1982

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