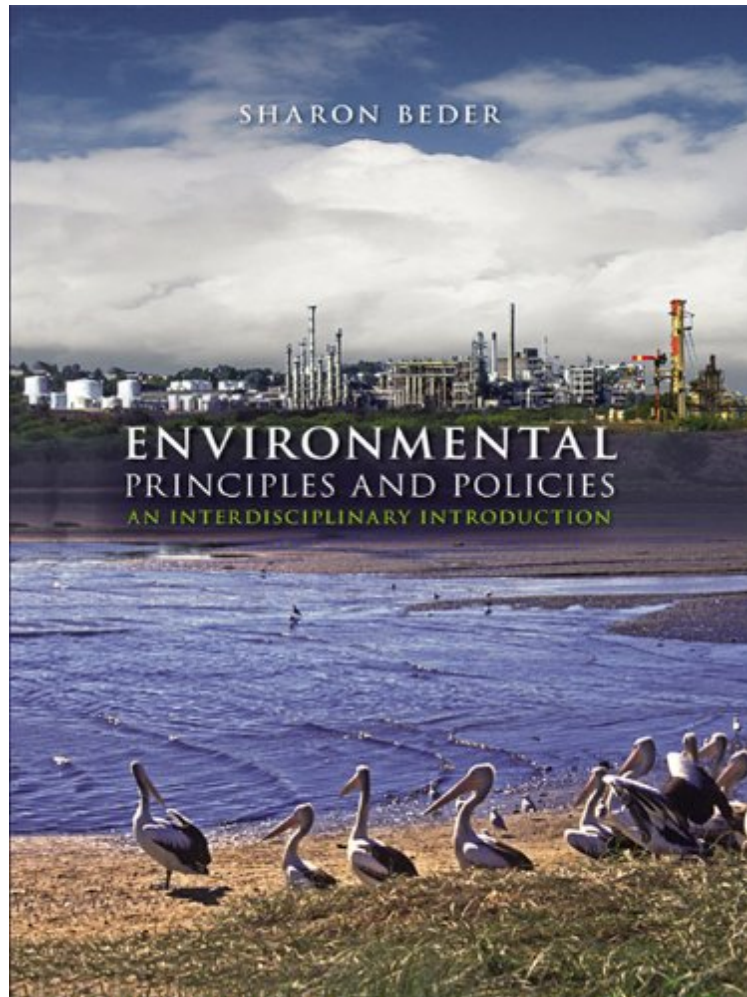


# Environmental Principles and Policies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction

Sharon Beder

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**Sharon Beder : Environmental Principles and Policies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Environmental Principles and Policies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction:

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being sold with a ton of writing in them. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Carbon Credit Trading Myth By Pat B. One economic myth is that all it takes to control the environmental crisis is a system for trading carbon credits. Sharon Beder debunks this myth in "Environmental Principles and Policies." Beder is a well-known environmental expert who is a professor at University of Wollongong, Australia. "Environmental Principles and Policies" starts off slowly with excellent background chapters on the environmental principles of sustainability, polluter pays, precaution, participation, equity, and human rights. Following this is an outline of the use by economists of cost-benefit analysis as a rationale for the trading of environmental emissions such as carbon credits. Beder's distinct message comes out in the remaining chapters where she evaluates contemporary economic instruments in terms of her environmental principles. According to neo-liberal and neo-conservative economists, systems for the trading of environmental emissions are based on the economic principle that society should only pay for the level of pollution control that cost-benefit analysis determines to be optimal. This optimum is reached by increasing pollution controls up to the level where environmental damage costs equal pollution control costs. Sharon Beder sees this economic analysis as faulty. She shoots holes through it in her discussion of the following Principles.

1. Sustainability Principle The sustainability principle recognizes the limitations of the planet earth in its ability to absorb pollution and provide materials for the consumption of society. Environmental sustainability is more likely to be achieved through legislation than with emissions trading systems. For example, Germany achieved 90% reduction in acid rain through legislation; whereas, the United States achieved much less reduction in acid rain through their emissions trading program.
2. Polluter Pays Principle In a system of environmental damage control that supports the polluter pays principle, a corporation either pays to prevent pollution or pays for remediating the damage done by pollution. This principle fails in emissions trading systems since research has found that the equilibrium price is much lower than the actual costs of remediating pollution. A related drawback of emissions trading systems is that there is no motive to innovate. Instead, firms fix pollution that is easy to fix and sell their credits to companies that need to endure the higher costs of innovation to fix their pollution. For example, innovative methods of reducing nitrous oxide were developed in California under a legislative system, but these were not widely implemented when an emissions trading system was introduced at a later date.
3. Precautionary Principle The precautionary principle is followed when a system takes into account the uncertain level of risk that irreversible damage will be the end result of specific actions. Under the precautionary principle, decisions about developing or preserving an environmentally sensitive plot of land, need to deal with the risks of not being able to reverse a decision to develop. An emissions trading systems does not account for this uncertain risk. Instead, it assumes that it has certain and irrefutable knowledge about the economic potential of preserving or developing the plot of land.
4. Human Rights Principle Beder lists three social principles in "Environmental Principles and Policies": human rights, equity, and participation. One human right is the right to an environment that is conducive to one's well-being. Emissions trading systems are not as effective at following this human rights principle since the level of pollution is generally higher under emissions trading systems than under those enforced by legislation.
5. Equity principle The equity principle emphasizes the needs to have social justice for all - an entitlement of everyone to an acceptable quality and standard of living. Emissions trading systems fail to have equity since they tend to have spotty pollution after pollution controls are only installed in those factories where they are cheapest. The end result is that a valley is polluted when it has a factory for which the installation of pollution controls would be very expensive. Under a legislative system, the pollution control equipment would either be installed or the factory would be closed.
6. Participation Principle The participation principle engenders the rights of citizens to participate in decisions affecting them. Such participation is not part of emissions trading systems, but is a part of the development of much legislation to control environmental damage. Sharon Beder cites many more examples in "Environmental Principles and Policies." These demonstrate that government legislation can follow her six environmental principles; whereas, these principles are violated by emissions trading systems. The economic justification of emissions trading systems emphasizes their economic efficiency, but fails to account for their lack of effectiveness in truly controlling pollution. Sharon Beder points to these and other false assumptions of economic cost-benefit analysis in "Environmental Principles and Policies."

Environmental Principles and Policies uses environmental and social principles to analyse the latest wave of economic-based and market-orientated environmental policies currently being adopted around the world. This book provides an in-depth examination of six key principles that have been incorporated into international treaties and the national laws of many countries: \* ecological sustainability \* the polluter pays principle \* the precautionary principle \* equity \* human rights \* public participation. These principles are then used to evaluate a range of policies including pollution charges, emissions, trading, water markets, biodiversity banks and tradable fishing rights. Environmental Principles and Policies is easily accessible, using non-technical language throughout, and - in what sets it apart from other books on environmental policy-making - it takes a critical and interdisciplinary approach. It does not set out policies in a descriptive or prescriptive way, but analyses and evaluates policy options from a variety of perspectives. This enables readers to gain a thorough grasp of important principles and current policies, as well as demonstrating how principles can be used to critically assess environmental policies.

'A vigorous demolition of the pervasive neoliberal approach to environmental issues, which is marked by government policies of emissions trading, 'eco-taxes' and the like.' Green Left Weekly, # 698, February, 2007 'In Environmental Principles and Policies, Sharon Beder has carefully dissected the various trends and mechanisms of market-based environmental policy...For anyone who has to negotiate the fog of public environmental policy, it is essential reading: activists, journalists, students - and anyone actually working within the state or corporate bodies that deal with these issues could find an epiphany in its pages, too.' Green Left Weekly, # 698, February, 2007 'The growth of environmental issues has thrown up a series of concepts over the years. Often these are taken 'as-given' without seemingly any need for a more critical approach. The rise of econometric models of ecology and environment have also grown and have in many cases overtaken, in the popular mind, these more basic and fundamental ideas. However, with EU legislation increasing and a more mature approach to environmental policies there has been a return to some of the earlier key ideas. What is needed therefore is a text to describe and evaluate these in concepts in the context of current debates about the environment - which is where this text starts. This is a very useful reference for the educator. It deals with some of the current issues but blends them with the ideas, well developed in the past, that provide a more equitable distribution of resources. The book is, in effect, a critique of current views but using a framework of the older, more developed principles. As such it provides us with a very good reference and critique of these often-neglected areas.' Ecological and Environmental Education (British Ecological Society) 'The book is well researched, well written and is highly recommended' Livestock Science 'The book is remarkable...it is written in a clear, non-technical language, and the arguments are systematically structured.' Luc Hens, Environment and Pollution, 2010. 'A good, practical guide which will be valuable to environmental practitioners and managers.' AJH, Eagle Bulletin About the Author Sharon Beder, a professional engineer who researches and teaches environmental politics, is professor in the School of Social Sciences, Media and Communication at the University of Wollongong, Australia. She is an award-winning author of several successful books including *Suiting Themselves* (April 2006), *Global Spin*, *Power Play* and *Selling the Work Ethic*.