

A new ark is needed. With the extinction of perhaps 50,000 species per year, we are at a critical juncture in history. Ominous storm clouds have gathered to threaten humanity's most basic resource of all, the diversity of life on earth. And the danger facing us--the possibility of losing forever hundreds of thousands of species with whom we share this planet--is magnified by the fact that this rapid decline of global biodiversity is too vast to be handled solely by states or their existing international institutions. Michael Gunter suggests that a fundamentally different route is needed to stem the ongoing extinction crisis. In an eye-opening appraisal of the current threat to global biodiversity, one that truly approaches a deluge of biblical proportions, he concludes that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are the best and perhaps only actors situated to negotiate the powerful array of political and economic interests involved in species loss as well as species preservation. Showing how NGOs fit into the landscape of international biodiversity protection and what makes them so effective, Gunter's innovative work demonstrates that NGOs provide invaluable assistance by fostering fundamental linkages between domestic and international, ecological and economic, and short- and long-term considerations. Such linkages are strategic. They defuse special-interest political agendas and open up avenues for discussing biodiversity issues worldwide. In short, they help build the next ark. Gunter focuses on the symbiotic relationship between a handful of specific mainstream and participatory strategies employed by a diverse group of well-known environmental NGOs (Sierra Club, World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International and Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, to name but a few). Determining which strategies work and which do not, this text offers a detailed prescription for how NGOs can improve their species protection efforts. It looks at how NGOs work within the system. It looks at how NGOs work with people. And it looks at how NGOs must work on themselves. While scholars have previously outlined the essential functions of NGOs, *Building the Next Ark* is the first to look at how their day-to-day operations translate into truly effective biodiversity protection.

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