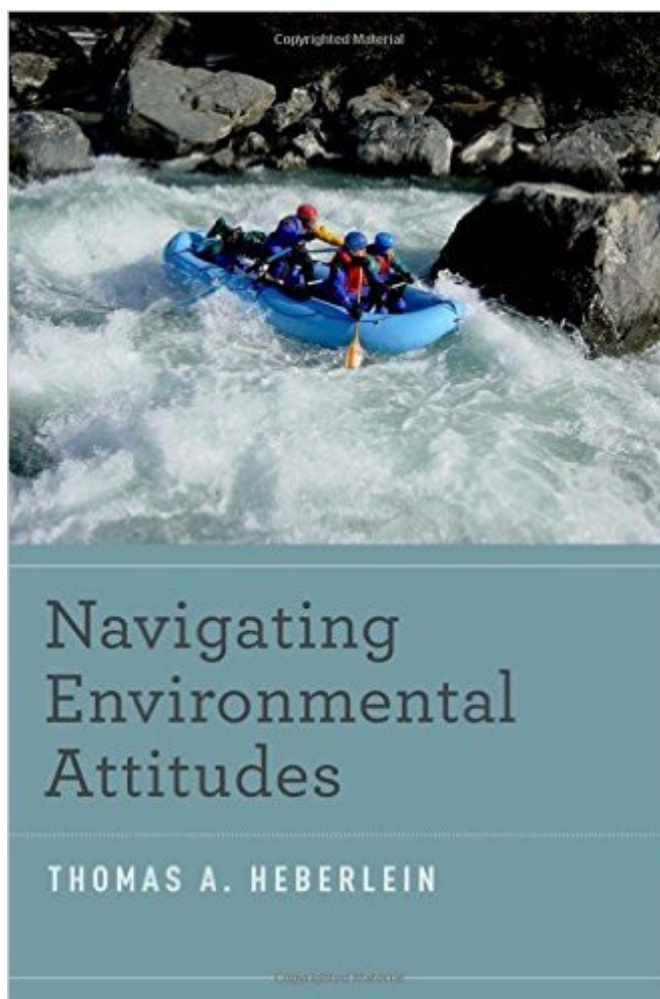


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# Navigating Environmental Attitudes



## Synopsis

The environment, and how humans affect it, is more of a concern now than ever. We are constantly told that halting climate change requires raising awareness, changing attitudes, and finally altering behaviors among the general public-and fast. New information, attitudes, and actions, it is conventionally assumed, will necessarily follow one from the other. But this approach ignores much of what is known about attitudes in general and environmental attitudes specifically-there is a huge gap between what we say and what we do. Solving environmental problems requires a scientific understanding of public attitudes. Like rocks in a swollen river, attitudes often lie beneath the surface-hard to see, and even harder to move or change. In *Navigating Environmental Attitudes*, Thomas Heberlein helps us read the water and negotiate its hidden obstacles, explaining what attitudes are, how they change and influence behavior. Rather than necessarily trying to change public attitudes, we need to design solutions and policies with them in mind. He illustrates these points by tracing the attitudes of the well-known environmentalist Aldo Leopold, while tying social psychology to real-world behaviors throughout the book. Bringing together theory and practice, *Navigating Environmental Attitudes* provides a realistic understanding of why and how attitudes matter when it comes to environmental problems; and how, by balancing natural with social science, we can step back from false assumptions and unproductive, frustrating programs to work toward fostering successful, effective environmental action."With lively prose, inviting stories, and solid science, Heberlein pilots us deftly through the previously uncharted waters of environmental attitudes. It's a voyage anyone interested in environmental issues needs to take."-- Robert B. Cialdini, author of *Influence: Science and Practice*"*Navigating Environmental Attitudes* is a terrific book. Heberlein's authentic voice and the book's organization around stories keeps readers hooked. Wildlife biologists, natural resource managers, conservation biologists - and anyone else trying to solve environmental problems - will learn a lot about attitudes, behaviors, and norms; and the fallacy of the Cognitive Fix."-- Stephen Russell Carpenter, Stephen Alfred Forbes Professor of Zoology, University of Wisconsin-Madison"People who have spent their lives dealing with environmental issues from a broad range of perspectives consistently abide by erroneous assumption that all we need to do to solve environmental problems is to educate the public. I consider it to be the most dangerous of all assumptions in environmental management. In *Navigating Environmental Attitudes*, Tom Heberlein brings together expertise in social and biophysical sciences to do an important kind of 'science education'-educating eminent scientists about the realities of their interactions with the broader public." --the late Bill Freudenburg, Dehlsen Professor of Environment and Society, University of California, Santa Barbara

## Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (September 24, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199773335

ISBN-13: 978-0199773336

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 0.6 x 6.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (13 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #107,873 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #76 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Public Affairs & Policy > Environmental Policy #136 inÂ Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Civil & Environmental > Environmental #253 inÂ Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Political Science > Public Policy

## Customer Reviews

This book is a must read for those who wonder why we don't do more to protect the environment, for those who are trying to encourage environmental protection and for social scientists who work on the environment. Tom Heberlein is a pioneer in environmental social psychology--much current work in the field follows from his pioneering studies. In this book, he summarizes what he has learned over decades of research on topics as diverse as energy conservation, assigning economic value to the environment and preventing actions that harm the environment. The book is an engaging read. Each chapter describes Tom's involvement in an important project, and the successes and foibles of efforts to encourage people to "do the right thing." Reading across these examples, one comes away with a sound understanding of what we know about the social psychology of environmental concern, and how we could do a much better job using that knowledge for practical purposes. I hope it will be routinely assigned in courses in environmental social sciences, conservation biology and environmental policy.-Tom Dietz-- Sociology, Environmental Science and Policy and Animal Studies, Michigan State University.

In this well-written book Heberlein shows the fallacy of thinking that the way to solve environmental problems is to just "educate people," as not only is changing attitudes very difficult but the link between attitudes and actual behavior is often tenuous. Heberlein presents well-established theory and research on attitudes in a very readable fashion, and his examples are highly illuminating.

Non-social scientists and non-academics can easily profit from his message, and anyone concerned about environmental issues--from policy-makers to activists to lay people--will profit from reading it. Riley Dunlap, Regents Professor of Sociology, Oklahoma State University

This book describes, with embarrassing clarity, several of the misconceptions and naivety on information, attitudes and behaviour that many of us natural scientists may have. One is the assumption of a strong relation between attitude and behaviour, and another is the power of information, which is treated in chapter (5) Educating the Public ... and Other Disasters. Throughout the book, Prof. Heberlein successfully uses the analogy of going down a river in a canoe, with the rocks in the river representing attitudes. We have to know where they are, but cannot really change them as we go down the river. The book contains eleven chapters that are all nicely tied together, but each with its own story; a beginning and an end. The stories build on the author's own research and experience, but are not written as any ordinary scientific text. There is no disciplinary jargon, no complicated statistical models, but rather concrete examples with real people who build a scientific framework for us where values, attitudes, norms and behaviours are included. This is accomplished, almost without the reader noticing it. It has several passages where extracts of Aldo Leopold's life and thinking are used; one such example is when Aldo Leopold had changed his attitude to wolves late in life but still voted to restore bounties on the last wolves in Wisconsin.

This book is fun and fascinating. It explains why agencies and institutions routinely fail to "educate" people and change their attitudes about saving energy, reducing litter, avoiding floods, reducing traffic congestion, controlling lake algae, and other disasters and irritations. Heberlein explains why information alone seldom changes attitudes and behaviors, no matter how credible the data or messenger. Once beliefs, emotions and direct experience glue attitudes into place, budging them is as difficult as coaxing river boulders to move aside for rafters and kayakers. To solve environmental problems, Heberlein suggests working with public attitudes instead of trying to change them. How? Take a lesson from rivers and river-runners. Go with their flow. If you learn to read an attitude's currents and eddies to avoid snags and submerged obstacles, you'll safely run the most hazardous rapids. Heberlein's humor and storytelling skills turn local and international events and behavioral studies into fascinating lessons in solving environmental challenges. He explains several successes and frequent failures - some personal - to explain why we're more likely to navigate "rivers" than educate them. Although "Navigating Environmental Attitudes" is an academic book, it doesn't read like one. It's entertaining, fast-paced and informative, and as relevant to government policy-makers

as it is to academicians, environmentalists, corporate planners and traditional conservationists. It would be a shame if the book's primary audience is college students complying with a "required text" checklist.

I purchase this book for a conservation psychology class and has proved to be incredibly useful. It talks a great deal about how human behavior functions and how leaders and educators can work towards positive changes using psychological techniques in order to achieve long-term goals. It is a good read for anyone who may be interested in pursuing a leadership position or someone who is interested in making positive changes in their life or the lives of others.

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