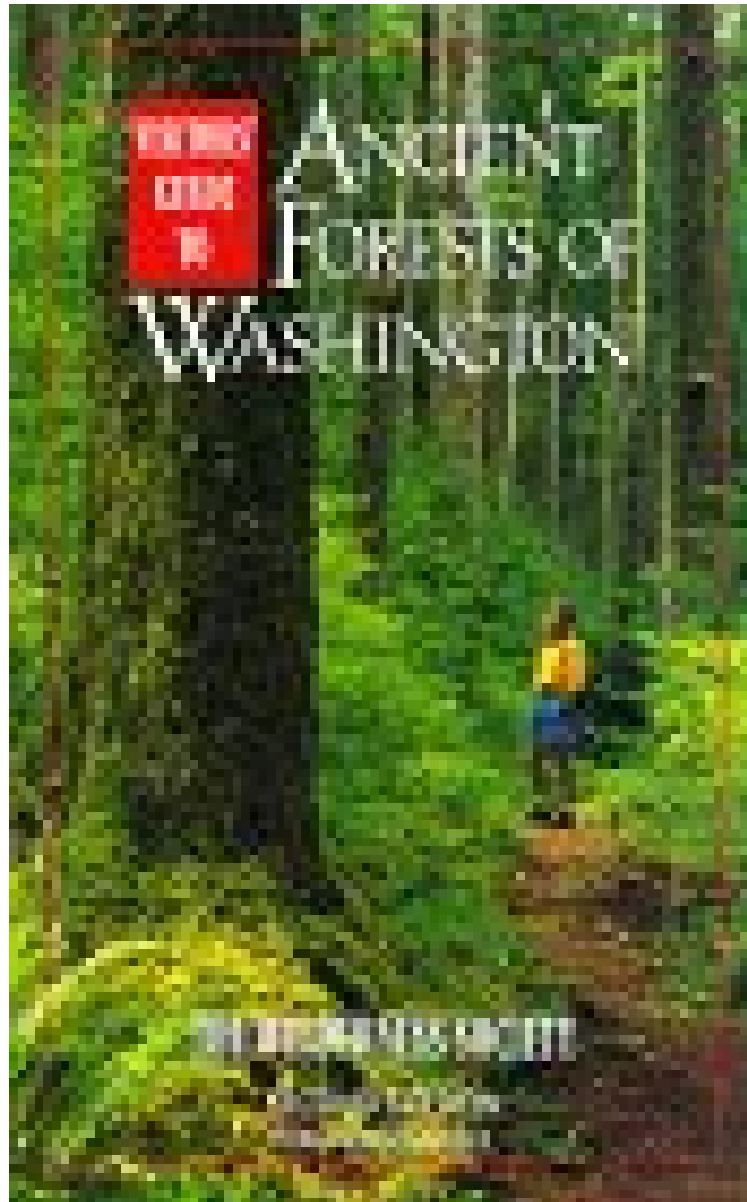


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From Brand: Mountaineers Books : Visitors' Guide to the Ancient Forests of Washington before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Visitors' Guide to the Ancient Forests of Washington:

Updated information on scenic hikes, trails, and walks in Washington's old-growth forests.

.com Once upon a time, the Pacific Northwest was dominated by old-growth forest--a never-been-cut complex of giant conifers, ferns, mosses, wildflowers, and critters large and small. Today, more than 90 percent of Washington's seemingly endless expanse of big trees (mainly firs, pines, hemlocks, and cedars) and accompanying understory plants and animals have fallen victim to the world's ever-increasing need for timber products. From the get-go, the author lays down the sad truth: "If past patterns of timber sales and clearcuts continue, ancient forest may disappear except within official wilderness and parks [and] the woods protected could be little more than tree museums." But rather than dwell on this discouraging possibility, *Ancient Forests of Washington* starts off with an easy-to-follow identification guide to the dominant old-growth forest tree species, then invites the reader to enjoy what's left of "one of the greatest natural ecosystems that ever evolved on our planet." After providing 37 possibilities for visiting towering trees in such unlikely places as smack-dab in the middle of West Seattle (Schmitz Park, to be exact) or the untrammeled Grove of the Patriarchs (located on an island in the Ohanapecosh River in Mount Rainier National Park), the author's modus operandi becomes quite clear: you can't save/care about what you haven't experienced yourself. That fact established, the remainder of this guide provides contact information for getting involved in saving what little old-growth forest is left. But rather than being a means to an end, trail descriptions brim with interesting and practical tidbits above and beyond things arboreal (Bumping Lake is "great for kids as it is nearly flat" and "goshawks and spotted owls" may be glimpsed at the West Fork Teanaway River, for instance). Maps and photos along with a suggested reading list round out the guide. --Martha Silano