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What can we learn from the people of the Maya Lowlands?

Integrating history, biodiversity, ethnobotany, geology, ecology, archaeology, anthropology, and other disciplines, The Lowland Maya Area is a valuable guide to the fascinating relationship between man and his environment in the Yucatán peninsula. This book covers virtually every aspect of the biology and ecology of the Maya Lowlands and the many ways that human beings have interacted with their surroundings in that area for the last three thousand years. You'll learn about newly discovered archaeological evidence of wetland use; the domestication and use of cacao and henequen plants; a biodiversity assessment of a select group of plants, animals, and microorganisms; the area's forgotten cotton, indigo, and wax industries; the ecological history of the Yucatán Peninsula; and much more. This comprehensive book will open your eyes to all that we can learn from the Maya people, who continue to live on their native lands, integrating modern life with their old ways and teaching valuable lessons about human dependence on and management of environmental resources.

The Lowland Maya Area explores:

the impact of hurricanes and fire on local environments

historic and modern Maya concepts of forests

the geologic history of the Yucatán

challenges to preserving Maya architecture

newly-discovered evidence of fertilizer use among the ancient Maya

cooperation between locals and researchers that fosters greater knowledge on both sides

recommendations to help safeguard the future

The Lowland Maya Area is an ideal single source for reliable information on the many ecological and social issues of this dynamic area. Providing you with the results of the most recent research into many diverse fields, including traditional ecological knowledge, the difficult transition to capitalism, agave production, and the diversity of insect species, this book will be a valuable addition to your collection.

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As the editors of The Lowland Maya Area say in their concluding chapter: "If we are to gain global perspective from the changing Maya world, it is that understanding space and time is absolutely critical to human persistence." Understanding how the Maya have interacted with their environment for thousands of years while maintaining biodiversity will help us understand how we too can work for sustainable development in our own environments.