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Review of *Holistic Management: A New Framework for Decision Making*, Second Edition by Allan Savory with Jody Butterfield

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Holistic Management: A New Framework for Decision Making. Second edition. Allan Savory with Jody Butterfield. Washington, DC: Island Press, 1999. xviii+616 pp. Figures, tables, illustrations, photos, color plates, notes, references, index. \$50.00 cloth (ISBN 1-55963-487-1), \$30.00 paper (ISBN 1-55963-488-X).

The combination of science and human endeavor helps us understand nature, express ourselves as humans, and shape the environments in which we live. People wish to make decisions promoting the integrity of the ecological processes we depend on, along with the social and financial health of

human communities and organizations. While we can effectively apply mechanical principles to activities such as air travel, we still have trouble managing complex situations involving ecological and human systems. It is easy to drive or fly across the Great Plains. It is more difficult to solve questions of aquifer decline, exotic plant invasion, or depopulation of agriculturally based communities. In any situation our management efforts will be most effective if we can consider the myriad of relevant ecological, social, and financial details. This requires us to learn how to think and act in wholes.

Allan Savory introduces the Holistic Management Model, a decision making process designed to help people think and act in wholes. It shares his career experiences in Africa, the Americas, and other locales as he bridges ecology and human management to develop "a new framework for decision making that enables people to make decisions that satisfy immediate needs without jeopardizing their future well-being or the well-being of future generations." Savory explains concepts of holism found in Jan Smuts's 1926 *Holism and Evolution*, coins the term "brittleness" to describe the biological decay capacities of environments from jungle to true desert, and shows the importance of herding animals and predators in stimulating grassland productivity through intense uses over very short time spans. The model requires people to create and own a holistic goal describing the most valued things in their lives today and the ecological, infrastructure, and human resource base needed for the future.

Savory is adamant about our human dependency on the earth's ecosystem. "Where we once viewed our global ecosystem — everything on our planet and in its surrounding atmosphere — mainly as a source of raw materials, we now view it as the foundation on which all human endeavor, all economies, and all life are built." Agriculturalists, politicians, and industrialists or business organizations all depend on the greater ecosystem, even if some do not work directly with land or natural resources. Savory shows how we are connected with the ecological processes of water and mineral cycles, energy flow, and community dynamics while giving us ways to assess their integrity. Within the model there are "tools used to manage our ecosystem" along with "testing guidelines" to assess the ecological, social, and financial viability of the tools and actions before implementation. This forward-looking dimension helps people plan for success. The model concludes with a feedback loop allowing for monitoring and readjusting as conditions change or new knowledge becomes available. The book includes "practical guidelines for management" and planning procedures for financial, land planning,

and grazing details. It shows how the Holistic Management Model can help diagnose problems and guide research and policy development.

Carefully written for a general audience, *Holistic Management* presents new paradigms of thought and action that will educate specialists as well on how to understand and work with whole situations. Allan Savory, with Jody Butterfield's assistance, has applied what he has learned since publishing the first edition in 1988 to make this second edition a most usable resource. **Cliff Montagne**, *Department of Land Resources and Environmental Science, Montana State University*.