



# Preface

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## Definitions

**Restorative Development** A mode of economic activity that returns property, structures, or objects to an earlier condition, transforms them into a healthier and/or more functional condition, or replaces an unsalvageable structure without consuming more land.

—working definition (by author)

**The Realm of Restorative Development** The industries, institutions, professions, government agencies, etc. that research, teach, fund, design, or perform restorative development, or supply its technologies.

—working definition (by author)

**Restoration Economy** An economic period in which restorative development is the dominant mode (as opposed to either new development or maintenance/conservation).

—working definition (by author)

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During the '70s and '80s, my return trips to favorite islands, villages, SCUBA sites, and mountain jungles almost invariably broke my heart. Usually, they had significantly deteriorated—and often had been destroyed outright—since my last visit.

In many cities, their best assets (such as beautiful historic buildings) had been replaced with sterile, ugly monstrosities that would themselves be torn down in 30 years. Developers were increasingly desperate for new land to conquer and were taking whatever they could get . . . appropriate or not.

But then, in the late '90s, I began noticing a miraculous new trend: a number of places—both ecosystems and communities—were actually getting better, some spectacularly so. Rivers that had been devoid of fish were teeming with them. Blighted industrial waterfronts were becoming

gorgeous, lively, economically thriving public areas. Devastated, clear-cut hills were becoming forests again—*real* forests, not just the typical tree farms that are devoid of wildlife.

I began investigating this seeming miracle and discovered a monstrously huge, almost entirely hidden economic sector. It was restoring our world—both our built environment and our natural environment—and it already accounted for over a trillion dollars per year. But nobody was paying it any attention! I found this incredible, and decided to expose these sneaky people.

I also wanted to help bring the millions of restorationists together. All were working in isolation, unaware that they were part of the fastest-growing economic sector on the planet. I wrote this book because I wanted the public to see them, wanted more businesses to partake in the profits they were making, wanted more communities to follow their example, and I wanted them all to “look up and see each other.”

### **READ THE FOLLOWING SIX PARAGRAPHS, AND YOU’LL KNOW THIS BOOK’S MAJOR IDEAS**

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, we failed to notice a turning point of immense significance. New development—the development mode that has dominated the past three centuries—lost significant “market share” to another mode: restorative development. Despite the fact that restorative development will dominate the twenty-first century, its phenomenal rate of growth has gone largely undocumented. This is hardly an unimportant transition: economic growth based primarily on the exploitation of new resources and territories is giving way to economic growth based on expanding our resources and improving our existing assets. How could we miss a story like that?

More importantly, why is it happening? Primarily, it’s because we’ve now developed most of the world that *can* be developed without destroying some other inherent value or vital function of that property. The major driver of economic growth in the twenty-first century will thus be *redeveloping* our nations, *revitalizing* our cities, and *rehabilitating* and expanding our ecosystems. We’ll be adding health and wealth, in a way that doesn’t cause a corresponding loss of health or wealth elsewhere. (If that sounds like sustainable development to you, note that restorative development isn’t about expanding our domain in a sustainable manner: it’s about revitalizing the domain we already occupy. More on this in Chapter 14.)

Development activity comes in three life cycle “flavors”: (1) new development, (2) maintenance/conservation, and (3) restorative development. Obvious? Sure. But we’ve failed to formally acknowledge these three modes of development in our economic and social dialogue. This failure substantially delayed our inevitable transition to the long-lasting “third” mode: restoration (the real “third wave”?). This has been a tragic oversight, because, of the three development modes, restorative development is the only one that can fuel continual economic growth without limit. Fortunately, the “restoration backlog” is creating such pressure that we seem to be making up for lost time.

We’ve been stuck in the first stage of development (new development) far too long. Like a homeowner who compulsively adds another floor to his/her house each year, this habit of continually “piling on,” rather than restoring what we’ve already got, can only end in collapse. This has put us deep in the throes of three global crises: the Constraint Crisis, the Corrosion Crisis, and the Contamination Crisis. Together, they form the foundations of the Restoration Economy, and are good guides to business and community restoration opportunities.

The Restoration Economy can be divided into eight component industries (actually macro industries): four natural and four built. These eight industries are currently balkanized and inefficient—hamstrung by separation from one another—and therein lies great opportunity. Industries that restore the *built* environment have far more in common with those restoring the *natural* environment than either group realizes. The various restorative professions need to recognize, celebrate, and leverage what they have in common, for their mutual benefit. With integration, restorative development’s displacement of new development as the dominant paradigm will occur far more quickly—possibly in just a few years, rather than a decade or more.

Restoration will soon account for the vast majority of development on this planet. It already rules in many U.S. cities, such as Chicago, Louisville, and Washington, D.C. Whether it becomes the dominant mode in 2010, or as late as 2020, will largely depend on how soon corporate and government planners wake up to the fact that restorative development is already the fastest growing of the three development modes. Those leaders who become aware of this vast new frontier of opportunity, and who guide their community, national, and company futures in this direction, will be the foremost leaders of the twenty-first century.

## WHAT THIS BOOK IS, WHAT IT ISN'T, AND WHO IT'S FOR

This is not a technical book—and it's certainly not an economics book—despite the title and the plethora of technical subjects. Although the subject matter is deadly serious, I've chosen to write in an informal, anecdotal style. Restoration has become a very passionate subject for me, so I hope you'll forgive an occasional rant, personal story, or attempt at humor.

My goal is to catalyze, not catalog, so you won't be wading through copious footnotes (which might be frustrating for researchers and teachers, I know, but it's preferred by my principal target audience: organizational leaders). This is primarily a business book, for readers of every stripe: corporate leaders, investors, entrepreneurs, engineers, contractors, architects, scientists, environmentalists, students, developers, and government planners, to name a few. What these diverse readers have in common may relate to your reason for exploring these pages:

1. a professional need or personal desire for insight into the future of world economic development and investment trends.
2. a career that requires you to generate a constant flow of immediate growth opportunities.
3. a personal passion (or political agenda) for revitalizing human communities and/or ecosystems, in a way that produces dramatic, measurable results and healthy business or tax revenues.

Those factors apply to the world of business, nonprofits, and government alike.

This book is meant to launch a new dialogue, not to resolve or end one. We need to start talking about, thinking about, and researching the “whole” created by the myriad activities that are already restoring our built and natural environments worldwide.

**Restorative development:** The process of adding new value to natural or built assets, ideally in a manner that detracts neither from their other preexisting values, nor from the value of other assets.

—one of several working definitions (by author)

I hope you'll find this book not only exciting and useful, but sensitizing. One early reviewer reported that reading the manuscript of this book reminded him of taking a wilderness survival course, after which he suddenly perceived the wealth of edible and medicinal plants that had surrounded him all along. Likewise, before you've finished this book, you'll probably start seeing restorative development everywhere you look.

This is not some wistful vision of the future: it's already happening. Restoration comprises the largest new economic growth cycle since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Millions of people are already working at it and/or investing in it as you read this, and billions are already benefiting from it. What can you do with this newfound awareness of restorative development? You can revitalize your company, your land, or your community. In doing so, you may just revitalize your life.

Our "frontier-style" economic mode, in which we turn virgin land into farms, highways, and buildings—and irreplaceable virgin resources into products and waste—is reaching its natural terminus. Development has arrived at the ends of the Earth. Progress has nowhere to turn, except to revisit and restore what we've already wrought.

Most of us are at least vaguely aware of the eight industries of restoration that comprise the realm of restorative development, but we're only now beginning to perceive them as a discrete, multifaceted economic sector. Perception is seldom a linear progression: stare at the eight restorative industries long enough, and—like one of those "magic pictures"—all of a sudden the omnipresence of restorative development becomes startlingly clear, leaving us shaking our heads at our previous obliviousness.




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## THE THREE MODES OF THE DEVELOPMENT LIFE CYCLE

Maturing civilizations stand on three legs:

1. new development
2. maintenance/conservation
3. restorative development

Dominance periodically shifts from one leg to another, fundamentally altering technology, culture, and commerce. We are now in such a transition.

- **New Development** This crude pioneering mode launches most communities and civilizations, but destroys irreplaceable assets if prolonged. New development is fast becoming less profitable, less desirable, and less possible.
  - **Maintenance/Conservation** This calmer mode is always present, seldom dominant.
  - **Restorative Development** This dynamic, high-energy mode restores the existing built environment and natural environment. Restorative development is nearing dominance—in construction, ecology, government, and business.
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