Cities in the Wilderness

Bruce Babbitt

Former U.S. Secretary of the Interior

The restoration of the Florida Everglades. The return of the wolf to Yellowstone and the condor to the wild. The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Dismantling obsolete dams. Each was a landmark of environmental progress in the 1990s, and each was realized under the guidance of then Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt. Now he draws on these experiences to develop a surprising message: Such episodic conservation victories, however important, will not be sufficient either to protect our disappearing open spaces or to contain the blight of urban sprawl.

In Cities in the Wilderness, Babbitt makes the case for a new national land use policy. Throughout our history, from George Washington’s day to the present, federal policies have encouraged and subsidized destructive resource exploitation and out-of-control development that threaten the American landscape.

From Babbitt’s incisive analysis come a vision and a program for how it should be done: a federal leadership role in land use planning, a new way of thinking about open space that retains local control while acknowledging national interests. Babbitt’s writing celebrates key accomplishments in the environmental field while planning for greater ones—and he is an inspirational guide along that path.

8 pm, November 15, 2005
104 Computer Science Building

A reception and book-signing follow in the Banana Gallery, Computer Science Building