



# Our Common Wealth: The Hidden Economy That Makes Everything Else Work

*Jonathan Rowe, Peter Barnes*

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Why We Need the Commons

A huge part of our economy is invisible, invaluable, and under siege. This is “the commons,” a term that denotes everything we share. Some parts of the commons are gifts of nature: the air and oceans, the web of species, wilderness, and watersheds. Others are the product of human creativity and endeavor: sidewalks and public spaces, the Internet, our languages, cultures, and technologies. Jonathan Rowe illuminates the scale and value of the commons, its symbiotic relationship with the rest of our economy, its importance to our personal and planetary well-being, and how it is threatened by privatization and neglect. He unifies many seemingly disparate struggles—against pollution, excessive development, corporate marketing to children, and more—with the force of this powerful idea. And he calls for new institutions that create a durable balance between the commons and the profit-seeking side of our economy.

“This elegant book is a wonderful introduction to the originality of thought, clarity of expression, and humanity of vision that made Jonathan Rowe so respected by those who knew him. It will change the way you think about economic, environmental and social problems and how to solve them. “

— James Fallows, national correspondent, *The Atlantic*

“Jonathan Rowe describes the emerging movement to protect the vast commonwealth owned by the people. Gird yourself to see nature and human ingenuity in a very different light. Then open these pages and a whole new world will come into focus.”

—Ralph Nader

“There is an economics of common wealth. Common wealth can and must be managed. That is Jon Rowe’s gift to us.”

--George Lakoff, Professor of Cognitive Science and Linguistics, University of California at Berkeley and author of *Don’t Think of an Elephant*

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