

In ***The Ecological Indian***, Anthropologist author Shepard Krech III explores the complex historiography of Native Americans from their arrival on the continent at the close of the great Pleistocene Ice Age about 12,000 years ago to the present day. Focus is on aspects of Indians as ecologists and environmentalists as those terms are understood in a modern scientific context: and did they fit the image of the Noble Indian as that term was defined when first contact with European settlers was made?

With a complete and clear exposition of available knowledge, Krech characterizes Native Americans as environmentally conditioned managers of the natural environment, Mother Earth in cultural terms, even in the face of: the precipitous extinction of large megafauna (mastodons, mammoth, giant beaver, etc.) that were a primary source of food for the Paleoindians: short and long-term changes of the natural resource base in response to changes in regional and local climates: the ever-changing abundance and density of the Native populations: and the post-European-contact over-hunting of game animals, beaver in particular, due to the commodification of their hides for European trade. The capabilities of the Indians regarding their knowledge and management of the natural environment and its inhabitants led Krech to conclude that the Indians' "...knowledge parallels if not exceeds that possessed by many wildlife biologists."

For a balanced view of the indigenous (Noble Indian) perspective regarding ecology-driven lifeways versus the ecological concept of environmentally sound economic development of natural resources, ***The Ecological Indian*** is highly recommended.

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