



Susquehanna, River of Dreams

Susan Q. Stranahan

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"Rivers offer the perfect framework for a storyteller," writes Susan Stranahan. "They provide a beginning and an end with an obvious flow from one to the other. They neatly link people and events in history. They serve as paths of discovery and arteries of commerce. Not only can rivers be counted on for moments of great drama, but they also invariably attract their share of eccentric characters. So it is with the Susquehanna." In *Susquehanna, River of Dreams* award-winning journalist Susan Q. Stranahan tells the sweeping story of one of America's great rivers - ranging in time from the Susquehanna's geologic origins to the modern threats to its ecosystem, describing human settlements, industry and pollution, and recent efforts to save the river and its "drowned estuary," the Chesapeake Bay. The result is a unique natural history of the vast Susquehanna watershed and a compelling look at environmental issues of national importance. Stranahan's vivid account of her experiences on the Susquehanna, including interviews with the colorful and engaging people she met along its shores, capture the river's continuing ability "to fire the imagination, to stir the senses, to inspire dreams. The longest nonnavigable river in North America, the Susquehanna was never an important avenue of commerce. But the struggle over who would profit from the region's wealth of coal, timber, and farmland influenced the political landscape of the young United States for more than a century. Stranahan describes how canal builders, loggers, miners, and industrialists nearly destroyed the source of their wealth. And she tells of the river's frequent retaliation with historic, rampaging floods. Today, the Susquehanna is a study in contrasts: clean and healthy again along much of its length, in a few places still so polluted that nothing can survive. New threats from urbanization, modern agriculture, and nuclear power make the future uncertain. But Stranahan finds reasons for optimism in the ma

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