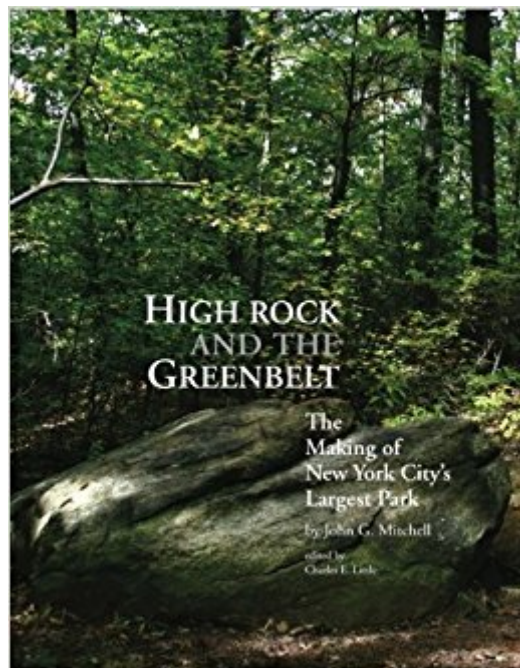




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# High Rock And The Greenbelt: The Making Of New York City's Largest Park (Center Books)



## Synopsis

In 1976, the influential journalist and National Geographic editor John G. Mitchell published a book in the hopes of saving a precious part of Staten Island, where he and his family had lived for many years. The book, *High Rock: A Natural and Unnatural History*, helped to save a beloved tract of land—a Girl Scout camp known as High Rock—from becoming the roadbed for a major highway being proposed by Robert Moses. The protection of this important parcel jump-started a modern conservation movement in the city and led to the creation of the Staten Island Greenbelt—a congeries of natural landscapes adjacent to High Rock that now links more than 2,800 acres of preserved open space, more than three times the size of Central Park's 843 acres. Now High Rock is once again available—retitled and with significant new material edited and introduced by the renowned author and conservationist Charles E. Little. As a supplement to John Mitchell's original text, this new edition features Charles Little's historical update on High Rock and the Greenbelt today, including the addition of Fresh Kills Park and its 2,200 acres; a gallery of brilliant photographs by Dorothy Reilly, of the Staten Island Greenbelt Foundation; a discussion of the future of the Greenbelt by land-conservation leaders and city officials, moderated by Deborah Popper of the College of Staten Island and Princeton University; and a directory of resources and places by the historian Michael C. Twomey, of the College of Staten Island.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

High Rock and the Greenbelt is the story of one of the more successful open-space preservation efforts in the nation, with a not-for-profit and government management structure that still works smoothly today. This new edition brings back into print John Mitchell's original and compelling natural, social, and political history in which local citizens took on the mighty Robert Moses and won; it also features new material by editor Charles Little and others, whose contributions are perfect updates and complements to the original. (Richard Flanagan, College of Staten Island) Nature is not an abstraction. It is always about particular places. In 1976, John Mitchell, a former Staten Island resident and nature writer in the tradition of John Muir and Aldo Leopold, brought his subject alive by publishing in evocative detail his sensory impressions and meditations in the face of specific sights and sounds. Now his book is republished with excellent new material in a new edition, High Rock and the Greenbelt. It is a testament to the early conservation battle that served as the clarion call fostering all the subsequent preservation of New York City's remaining natural areas. The book serves a wonderful purpose and will be of wide general interest. (Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, President of the Foundation for Landscape Studies, author of Rebuilding Central Park and Forests and Wetlands of New York City)

John G. Mitchell (1932-2007), a distinguished editor, journalist, and writer for Newsweek, Audubon, and National Geographic, was the author of eight books, among them The Hunt and Dispatches from the Deep Woods. Charles E. Little, who has held senior positions at several conservation institutions, is the author of fifteen books, among them The Encyclopedia of Environmental Studies and Greenways for America.

The past meets present in this multi-layered account that can be read and referenced again and again. "High Rock and the Greenbelt" fosters a deeper appreciation for the land that was preserved and those who led the grass-roots movement for its preservation. A richly detailed history is generously sprinkled with first-hand accounts from local preservationists, shedding light on previous struggles and current perils. A Directory at the end of the book provides a valuable reference to various places within and near the Greenbelt. The book is visually stunning, with Marbury Brown's illustrations and Dorothy Reilly's Photo Gallery communicating stories within the story. This book will be valuable for years to come and is a wonderful resource for institutions and municipalities looking to share their history, as a resource and reference in libraries, as a textbook for local history, urban planning, and environmental studies classes, as a family heirloom and coffee table conversation piece. This book makes a fantastic gift for anyone who loves the Greenbelt and "the borough of

Parks."

The reprint of Mitchell's book on High Rock Park and the SI Greenbelt is a beautiful publication offering an insight into the popular struggle to conserve the beautiful young forests on Staten Island. Rather than an effort from above resulting in the creation of a public commons, it was the very dedicated residents of the Island that rallied to preserve the treasure that is now a rich beltway of parks within NYC, a little known gem to residents of the outer boroughs and Manhattan.

A remarkable story that is told extremely well. I've been hiking these trails for decades and now it'll be with renewed appreciation. The photos here are shot with the eye of a true artist, and I found myself entranced--almost like being at The Museum of Modern Art (I walk through there quite a bit also). A sincere thank you to the author, researchers, and photographer. This has renewed my pride in being a native Islander.

The story of High Rock and the development of the Greenbelt Conservancy is a compelling narrative that highlights the success of this public-private partnership. The Greenbelt is a fantastic place and the best reason to live on Staten Island. Perhaps with the publication of this wonderful book Staten Island's best kept secret will become less of a secret.

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