Fall 2000

Review of *Groundwater Management in the West* by Jeffrey S. Ashley and Zachary A. Smith

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Groundwater Management in the West. Jeffrey S. Ashley and Zachary A. Smith. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999. viii+319 pp. Tables, notes, references, index. $45.00 cloth (ISBN 0-8032-4276-X).

Groundwater is becoming an increasingly important water source throughout the United States, especially in the West where surface supplies are limited and usually over-committed. An assessment of groundwater in the West is needed, and this book fills an important gap in providing useful information in a well-organized and accessible fashion.

Ashley and Smith discuss the West, incorporating nineteen states, within four subregions: Pacific Coast, Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, and the Southwest. Each state is addressed in an individual chapter observing the same format: after a brief introduction, the authors describe the state's physical characteristics and demographics, the laws, politics, and policy governing water use, and prospects for the future. The chapters range in length from seventeen pages for California and fourteen for Arizona and Nebraska to seven for South Dakota and Idaho and eight for Utah.

Much that is distinctive to each state is examined within this framework: the depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer in Kansas, for example, and the introduction of Active Management Areas to achieve safe yields in Arizona. One gains a good sense of the interplay of population, economic activity, governmental regulation, and groundwater quality and quantity issues in the individual states. Many chapters, including those devoted to the Great Plains states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, move beyond the presentation of facts regarding groundwater and its use and control.

The book's main weakness is its lack of any serious attempt at comparison or integration. An introduction sets the stage satisfactorily, but the three-page conclusion offers little. There is nothing about the relative importance of groundwater among the states. There are no maps or tables. A map of the West as a whole would have been helpful, to say nothing of maps of each of the subregions locating the places discussed in the text. Especially valuable would have been tables summarizing the demographic and water data given in each chapter.

Groundwater Management in the West is a comprehensive, accurate, and easy to read overview of groundwater in each of the region's states. All water practitioners, educators, and students with an interest in groundwater or the West would find the book worthwhile. **David E. Kromm**, *Department of Geography, Kansas State University.*