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Review: Land Use in America

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Recommended Citation

Brown, Perry J., "Review: Land Use in America" (1982). *Forest Management Faculty Publications*. 33.
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BOOK REVIEWS

Land Use in America. By Richard H. Jackson. 1981. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., One Wiley Drive, Somerset, New Jersey 08873. 226 p. \$29.95.

The development era of the 1950's and early 1960's followed by the preservation era of the mid 1960's through the 1970's gave rise to the considerable national interest in land use planning. It was no longer solely a topic of urban administration as highly mobile Americans became aware of land use patterns of rural and wild lands. In response to the needs recognized during the 50's and 60's, we have developed federal, state, and local means to plan for the future and to regulate current use of land. Some of these were old methods of land use planning and regulation which were reapplied or applied in new areas, and some were new methods developed for the time. Additionally, in response to our perceived need for land use planning we actively researched it, taught it, and wrote about it.

During the 1970's, numerous books were written about specific activities and topics in land use planning. William Reilly's, *The Use of Land: A Citizen's Policy Guide to Urban Growth* and the Natural Resources Defense Council's *Land Use Controls In The United States* are notable examples. Now at the beginning of the 1980's, we have a book which tries to put it all together regarding use of America's land and how we regulate that use.

This present book is broad in its attempt and limited in its success. Its major failings are superficiality, considerable redundancy, and occasional errors of fact. For example, seldom are topics examined in any depth. Land use regulation tools such as zoning, are discussed throughout the book, often with information repeated, and the relationship between the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is misstated. Nonetheless, there are some real pluses for the book. While it does not give a very complete view of the actual uses of America's land, issues such as the preservation of prime agricultural land are well reviewed. It is also a good primer on land use controls. Finally, while most land use books focus on planning in populated regions, such as the east and west coasts, this book draws on several examples from the oasis settled Rocky Mountain states. These examples give it a more western flavor and one to which many westerners could relate.

The book gives an overview of land use planning and if an overview is needed, it is satisfactory. Covered are a discussion of the extent of the Nation's land resources, factors affecting the use of land, land use controls, institutions involved in land use decision making, and contemporary topics such as urban sprawl and prime agricultural land. These topics are packaged into ten chapters which conclude with a discussion of land use planning needs for the future. In summary, they overview the situation. That is okay, but if you are looking for a more detailed treatment of the subject, you need to look elsewhere.—*Perry J. Brown, Corvallis, Oregon.*

Water in Desert Ecosystems. Edited by Daniel D. Evans and John L. Thames. 1981. Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, Inc. 523 Sarah St., Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania 18360. 280 p. \$35.00.

This book is a contribution from the International Biological Program sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences with

support from the National Science Foundation. It is volume 11 in a series of books directed toward an understanding of major ecological or human systems.

The book consists of 13 contributions covering a wide collection of information on water in relation to desert ecosystems. Subjects covered include: discussions of desert ecosystems in general; morphological and physiological characteristics of plants, climatic features and soils; modeling soil-water-plant-atmosphere conditions; flow of water and energy; water as a factor in biology of North American desert plants; potential evapotranspiration; actual evapotranspiration; precipitation; modeling desert soil-water systems and modeling desert runoff and desert hydrologic systems.

Readers of the *Journal of Range Management* will find the articles falling into two general categories, those of interest to the general range manager and those very technical treatments of interest to range scientists. The introductory chapter on "Desert Systems" and the final chapter on "Desert Hydrologic Systems" are easily readable and informative for the general reader. The remaining chapters vary from easily understandable to the highly technical.

This book provides general information as an aid to a better understanding of water relations under desert conditions. Its chief value is as a technical reference book for those interested in range research, not from the standpoint of direct application, but rather as background information on subjects in which the general range scientist has limited expertise.

There is much of interest to range managers in Chapter 4, "Morphological and Physiological Characteristics of Desert Plants," and Chapter 7, "Water as a factor in the Biology of Northern American Desert Plants." In this chapter, the authors provide information on the relative water requirements of desert plants. Also, the authors give the familiar name in parenthesis where changes have been made, for example: *Ceretooides (Eurotia) lanata*.

There are a few errors, such as referring to the Mohave desert communities as *Larria artemisia* associations (p. 8) and the identification of agave as yucca (figure 4-9 p. 72). Also, there are a few obvious spelling errors probably chargeable to the printer.

As an overall appraisal, every serious researcher should have access to this book, and it provides limited reading for persons with a general interest in ecology and range management.—*William G. McGinnies, Tucson, Arizona.*

Environmental Systems Optimization. By Douglas A. Haith. 1982. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., One Wiley Drive, Somerset, New Jersey 08873. 306 p. \$28.95.

The book is intended to expose students and practitioners to applications of systems analysis and mathematical methods to environmental management problems. Professor Haith's approach is interesting in that he introduces topics with examples and then develops the mathematics of mathematical modeling or optimization methods. He succeeds in communicating his material to varying degrees.

The first chapter is an introduction to systems analysis and