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Review of *Implementing the Endangered Species Act on
the Platte Basin Water Commons*. By David M.
Freeman

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Implementing the Endangered Species Act on the Platte Basin Water Commons. By David M. Freeman. Foreword by Robert Ward. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2010. xxiv + 483 pp. Illustrations, tables, maps, appendices, photographs, references, index. \$45.00 cloth.

"There is something new under the Platte River Basin sun. It is habitat restoration produced by a richer civic life and better self-governance of an important water commons" (428).

David M. Freeman has written a landmark treatise on a landmark event—the development of the Platte River Habitat Recovery Program. The program's goal is to integrate provisions of the Endangered Species Act and the habitat needs of four imperiled species (interior least tern, piping plover, whooping crane, and pallid sturgeon) into river basin-wide water management policy. The process was formally initiated

in 1997 with the signing of a cooperative agreement between the states of Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming and the U.S. Department of the Interior, but discussions had been under way since the 1970s. The process was completed in 2006 when the program agreement was signed by the governors of the three states and the U.S. secretary of the interior and is now nearly halfway through the first 13-year implementation increment. In addition to the signatories to the agreement, critical participants in program negotiations included state and federal agencies (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Forest Service, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, and Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts), environmental groups (e.g., Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation), irrigation organizations (e.g., Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District), electric power generating companies (e.g., Nebraska Public Power District), and municipal water providers (e.g., Denver Board of Water Commissioners).

Presenting all of these constituencies' concerns without bias, Freeman focuses not on individual participants and personalities, but on policy, conceptual issues, and the efficacy of applying this cooperative approach to conservation. This is the book's strength. Freeman attended nearly all of the negotiating sessions over the ten-year process, developing working relationships with individuals from the participating agencies and organizations, and the work resulting from his efforts maintains a high standard of scholarship throughout. The appendices, maps, and figures will be a rich resource for students of the program for years to come. Beyond the book's value as a discussion of the program's development, it is a case study in itself of how a case study should be undertaken.

Freeman clearly recognizes that water management is the great issue of our time (and of our future). We must find broad-scale cooperative solutions if we hope to manage our resources responsibly. By presenting such a detailed chronology and providing insight into the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influenced the Platte Basin negotiations, he provides us with a model of how to proceed with negotiations for other river basins.

My only concern raised by the book is a lack of attention to detail in the individual species accounts in chapter 2, "Change on the River," where a few errors appear in the scientific names and in the natural history descriptions. Small issues, to be sure, in a work that will certainly become an indispensable resource for academics, policy makers, environmentalists, and others engaged in broad-scale water management. I hope Freeman is continuing to observe the implementation of the program and will provide an evaluation of its progress at the end of the first 13-year increment. It would be another landmark accomplishment.

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