Review of *Indian Water in the New West* Edited by Thomas R. McGuire, William B. Lord, and Mary G. Wallace

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The editors of this volume are all affiliated with the University of Arizona; McGuire in the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, Lord professor of agricultural and resource economics, and Wallace a senior research specialist in the Water Resources Center. The seventeen papers that comprise this volume, written by federal policy makers, professional mediators, economists, engineers, attorneys, one Native American tribal leader, and a professor of political science (no historians), were originally delivered at a 1989 symposium in Missoula, Montana on “Indian Water Rights and Water Resources Management.” These papers have been updated through 1992 and focus on, the period 1978 to 1992 in the area of Indian water rights and usage.

As these papers make clear, the establishment of Indian water rights has evolved through several stages since the Supreme Court in Arizona v. California (1963) reaffirmed Indian “Winters Doctrine” rights. That decision resulted in the initiation of numerous suits in the 1960s and 1970s to establish the amount of water to which Indians were entitled according to the formula of “practically irrigable acres” set forth in Arizona v. California. Decisions in these lengthy trials, many still pending, however, did nothing to assure Indians of the capital resources necessary to utilize the water awarded them. Congressional and presidential reluctance to spend federal moneys to build irrigation works on Indian reservations left the tribes with little more than an empty “right” at a time when non-Indians were greatly increasing their usage of available water. As a consequence, during the late 1970s and early 1980s attempts were made to dictate the “quantification” of the Indian rights through federal legislation. When these efforts came to naught, there began a series of stream adjudications in all the Western states whereby the courts would determine the priority and the amounts of water to be allocated to the various claimants on a given stream. These stream adjudications, of which “over fifty” are currently pending, in turn, gave rise to negotiated settlements among Indians, non-Indians, and the federal government, many of which are examined in this book.

There is not enough space in this brief review to comment adequately upon the various papers. Both the dangers and the advantages of negotiated settlements are explicated in this timely addition to the literature which is highly recommended to students of American Indians, the West, and water resource management.

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