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## Review of An Atlas of the Sand Hills

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*An Atlas of the Sand Hills.* Edited by Ann Bleed and Charles Flowerday. Lincoln: Conservation and Survey Division, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1989. 2nd ed. 1990. Color photographs, maps, tables, appendices, index. x + 238 pp. \$20.00 cloth, \$15.00 paper.

Although the goal of this "Resource Atlas" is to describe the largest region of sand dunes in the western hemisphere in a single, easily accessible volume, this well-illustrated narrative would more appropriately be labeled a natural history of the Sandhills. Half the book describes the region's physical environment, including climate, geology, and water supply, and another quarter treats flora and fauna.

As with all publications of the Conservation and Survey Division, the atlas contains great detail on the resources of the region. Nearly a hundred maps (many in a foldout 11 x 16 format) show daily solar radiation, Pliocene sediments, soils, saturated thickness of the principal groundwater reservoir, stream discharge, dune types, sharptail grouse range, and other topics. A number of Landsat images and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) images appear. A real treat is the collection of photographs, particularly the evocative works of Marianne Beel, a Sandhills resident.

In the human sphere (culture, economy, population, etc.) the results are less satisfactory, however. Residents are described by clichés and

present-day human patterns receive little attention. There are no maps and little discussion of population distribution. Agricultural distributions other than irrigation (in selected locations) and cattle (everywhere) are ignored. The history of the region is scattered in various locations throughout the work, resulting in duplication. The chapter on land development and use contains the most useful historical materials related to early ranching, the Kinkaiders, and the potash boom, but the depth of this survey is not comparable to those elsewhere in the volume.

The most serious problem with *An Atlas of the Sand Hills* is that it treats the various topics nearly independently of one another. The editors' introduction is a satisfactory overview of the region and its problems, but it fails to develop a framework or central themes to which individual chapters are linked. There is no summary chapter or index.

Viewed as a work on the resources of the Sandhills, this volume is functional and interesting. It brings together a wealth of data from technical reports that are not readily available. The quality of the maps and other graphics is good. The level of explanation is accessible to non-specialists, but experts in various fields will find much of value.

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