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**Review of *Water on the Great Plains: Issues and Policies* Edited by
Peter 1. Longo and David W. Yoskowitz**

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Water on the Great Plains: Issues and Policies. Edited by Peter J. Longo and David W. Yoskowitz. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2002. xv+200 pp. Bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth.

The centrality of water scarcity on the region's public agenda, the correlative need for preservation, and the policies and laws resulting from these circumstances are basic to the concerns of *Water on the Great Plains*. The book makes a valuable contribution to the study of equity in water rights, its ten chapters offering an accurate overview of the equity issue from several perspectives: geographical, historical, political, and cultural. A complex inquiry, the work provokes further thought—especially on the issue of negotiation and compromise.

Part 1 covers both physical and cultural matters. The opening chapter makes it clear that with less than 35 inches of rain per year, preservation of water becomes a common goal on the Plains. A water ethic has been emerging, balancing ecological, agricultural, and cultural sustainability. Meanwhile, multiple-use pressures as well as the number of stakeholders are increasing. The three-state Cooperative Agreement among Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming reflects an effort at compromise.

One chapter in this section devoted to the question of common culture and the extent to which a shared "ethic" could provide a basis for resolving continual conflicts over water argues that the concept of a common identity does not accurately represent reality. Pluralism is the rule on the Great Plains, and pluralism leads to conflict, not accord. But accord may be discovered in a plurality of approaches, whereby minority rights are not trampled on.

Part 2, "Realities," engages the reader in a broad range of economic, legal, and political conflicts involving local and regional concerns but also ones that cross state borders. New complications have also entered the equation: dormant Indian or Federal claims. The prior appropriation method, the traditional model of resolving water conflicts in the West, fails to provide a workable solution in dealing with these new claims since "first in time is first in right" becomes irrelevant. One compromise that incorporates new water for endangered species is the Platte River Cooperative Agree-

shape), to the area's more distinctive and common genera and species. Each species is illustrated with adequate line drawings (three different artists contributed) and mapped, using a combination of shading (species of common occurrence), dots (outlying or isolated localities), and stars (unconfirmed reports). An illustrated glossary, references, and index conclude the book. The authors follow volume 1 of the *Flora of North America North of Mexico* (1993) in circumscription of families, genera, and species.

It is no surprise that the most common family in the area is Pteridaceae, the maidenhair and brake ferns, many species of which are especially adapted to arid environments. Altogether, thirty-eight species in seven genera, half the total for the area, are members of this single family.

Ferns of the Trans-Pecos are still relatively poorly known, with thirty-one species rare (often two or fewer stations known within the region), or in some cases perhaps no longer extant. Many of these are cheilanthoid ferns (*Cheilanthes*, *Notholaena*, *Pellaea*), but three of the four known spleenworts (*Asplenium*) and all three fragile ferns (*Cystopteris*) are rare in the Trans-Pecos. This statistic suggests that further exploration will lead to the discovery of additional rarities from the region. One hopes *Ferns and Fern Allies* will stimulate those interested in plants to make new finds in this seriously underexplored and botanically varied area.

I recommend this book, which is as free of errors as a book can be, to professionals and amateurs alike, especially those who plan to explore this part of Texas, or to pteridophiles with a penchant for learning more about ferns. It would also be suitable for identification of ferns from adjacent areas of New Mexico and Texas. **Alan R. Smith**, *University Herbarium, University of California, Berkeley*.