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***Review of Species at Risk: Using Economic Incentives to Shelter
Endangered Species on Private Lands*** Edited by Jason F. Shogren

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Species at Risk: Using Economic Incentives to Shelter Endangered Species on Private Lands. Edited by Jason F. Shogren. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005. 271 pp. Tables, references, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

Consider the fact that approximately 80% of the species listed as endangered or threatened in the United States rely in part or completely on privately owned lands for their survival. For residents of the Great Plains, this statement certainly rings true. Most Great Plains states have public land ownership percentages below 10%, ranking among the lowest in the nation. And although we lack the abundance of listed species “enjoyed” by some of our neighbors, those we do have could not possibly subsist on the scattered fragments of suitable habitat found on public lands. Species-at-risk conservation, in the Great Plains especially, requires a means to engage the support and cooperation of private landowners. How to do so, using a variety of economic incentives mixed with Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulation, forms the focus of this very practical text.

Chapters in this volume fall into two sections, bracketed by introductory and concluding chapters that offer

some unifying perspective. The first section covers a broad menu of tools that can provide incentives for protecting species on private lands, starting with a chapter that discusses in considerable detail the legal basis and operation of existing tools under the ESA, such as Habitat Conservation Plans and Safe Harbor Agreements. These tools have had some success, but I found more promise in those examined in the following chapter where the authors weigh the pros and cons, with an admitted bias towards economics, of incentive mechanisms like zoning, impact fees, subsidies, tradable development rights, conservation banking, fee simple acquisition, and easements. The second section considers the challenges of using economic incentives.

Fascinating and difficult questions are examined, among them: How can incentives be employed without “commodifying” wildlife and eroding the stewardship ethic of landowners? How can economics alone change conservation without concomitant changes in values and ways of life for communities most reliant on natural resource use? Is there a consistent means of evaluating the conservation value of land? And how can we gain economic efficiency in our conservation efforts? Anyone thinking that economic incentives are a panacea for species-at-risk conservation needs to give this section a careful read. I found it highly thought-provoking.

One disappointment with this text is the datedness of the preponderance of its references. Most chapters draw heavily on events and trends from the mid-to-late 1990s. The active conservation practitioner will need to supplement the volume with more recent material to get a more complete picture of incentives in action, for example, those concerning the federal Landowner Incentive and Private Stewardship Grant programs. I also wondered about other perspectives on these issues given that 8 of 10 contributors to this edited volume all serve the same university. Overall, these minor faults do not significantly detract from the book’s value. For those considering development of an incentive program, *Species at Risk* should be required reading. For others, it offers some clear perspective on what the next era of species-at-risk conservation in the United States could look like. **Mace Hack**, *Wildlife Division, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission*.