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Book Review: *Water in Texas: An Introduction* By Andrew Sansom

C. Allan Jones

Texas A&M AgriLife Urban Solutions Center at Dallas

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Water in Texas: An Introduction. By Andrew Sansom. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008. xii + 319 pp. Maps, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paper.

At last we have a review of Texas water issues worthy of the name! Andrew Sansom's *Water in Texas: An Introduction* fills a void that has existed for many years. This easy-to-read 319-page introduction to Texas water will be an indispensable guide to students, professionals, and the public, laying out in easily understood language the importance and challenges of mitigating the effects of droughts and floods, protecting water quality, preserving environmental flows, and many other issues faced by water managers throughout the Great Plains. As part of the Texas Natural History Guides series, the volume has a tough flexible cover, is printed on high quality paper, and contains many excellent photographs and illustrations.

The book's first half includes a brief and cogent introduction, followed by chapters concerning how water has shaped the Texas landscape, the natural and human history of water resources in the state's extremely diverse regions and river basins, and the unique importance and challenges of supplying adequate water to the bays and estuaries of the Texas coast. The sections concerning specific river basins and bay systems give the reader a brief historical perspective of each area and describe how

its water resources have been modified and are managed for water supplies, irrigation, and recreation. Also discussed are the interactions of surface and ground waters, unique biological and geological features, water quality concerns, and challenges facing water managers.

The second half of the book addresses the organizations affecting Texas water planning and management, Texas water law (a blend of Spanish civil law and English common law), the challenge of providing adequate water to meet the state's future needs, water planning, water quality, the value of water, and the water resources legacy we are leaving future generations.

Author Andrew Sansom is one of Texas's leading conservationists. He has served as executive director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, executive director of the Texas Nature Conservancy, was founder of The Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas, and is currently executive director of the River Systems Institute at Texas State University in San Marcos. Throughout the book, Sansom emphasizes the biological, recreational, cultural, and economic values of maintaining healthy streams and coastal systems. He repeatedly returns to the challenges of maintaining adequate river flows and inflows to bays and estuaries while simultaneously providing adequate water supplies to agriculture and cities. He also stresses the importance of planning processes that involve multiple stakeholders and the use of the best available scientific information. Texas has employed this approach in preparing plans for both future water supplies and adequate environmental flows.

This excellent natural history guide is a must for Texas naturalists and water professionals. Readers throughout the Great Plains will enjoy learning about Texas's diverse water resources, as well as its successes and frustrations in managing them. **C. Allan Jones**, *Texas A&M AgriLife Urban Solutions Center at Dallas, and Former Director, Texas Water Resources Institute, College Station.*