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Review of *State Trust Lands: History, Management
and Sustainable Use* by John A. Souder and Sally K.
Fairfax

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State Trust Lands: History, Management and Sustainable Use. John A. Souder and Sally K. Fairfax. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996. xiv+370 pp. Tables, figures, notes, and index. \$40.00 cloth (ISBN 0-7006-0731-5).

According to its authors, the dual purpose of this book is to raise its readers' consciousness about state trust lands and to diversify our thinking about the hows and whys of all public resources. They have succeeded admirably on both counts. Everyone interested in the history, politics, economics, and management of western lands and natural resources has much to learn from this study. Souder and Fairfax have produced the benchmark work on the subject.

When most people, including those who consider ourselves "experts" on public affairs in the West, think of public lands we usually think of federal lands with their high political profile, manifested, for example, in the Sagebrush Rebellion. We need reminding that state trust lands, though less a

political lightning rod, remain nonetheless significant in terms of their extent (135 million acres), the revenue they yield for state functions like education to which these land trusts are dedicated, and the lessons they afford in public land management.

Souder and Fairfax add considerably to our understanding—raise our consciousness—about these lands by providing a comprehensive treatment that includes the history, economics, and administration of state trust lands management, as well as suggestions for their continued benefit to the states. The book is ambitious in its broad analytical focus, embracing twenty two programs in the western states—including Alaska and Hawaii. Its authors are able to pull this off, however, with an impressive breadth and depth of analysis, particularly in their presentation of original data. They do an excellent job of blending the experiences in the twenty-two states into a comparative appraisal, always mindful of the lessons these comparisons provide. Their overview of the history of trust lands is acute and instructive. They appear less sure of themselves, however, when undertaking economic analyses; and the chapters on cropland and grazing land, forestry and mineral management, informative though they are, get bogged down in minute, often legalistic details that make for some heavy reading.

While raising consciousness about state trust lands, the authors are more immediately concerned with airing questions and making suggestions about the management of public resources in general. Their primary approach is to compare practices by the federal government with the various forms of management in the twenty-two states of their study. A wide variety of management practices exist across these states. For example, there is considerable variation in the specific terms of programs for hardrock mining leases, as well as in the management of timber, crop, and grazing lands. This diversity of approach across twenty-two states offers the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management numerous “laboratories” yielding alternatives to federal techniques in public land management. Particularly thought provoking in this regard is the book’s final chapter which explores emerging strategies and issues not only in state trust lands management but in public resource management in general. **Clive S. Thomas**, *School of Education, Liberal Arts and Science, University of Alaska Southeast, Juneau.*