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## Review of *Wyoming: A Source Book* by Roy A. Jordan and S. Brett DeBoer

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**Wyoming: A Source Book.** Roy A. Jordan and S. Brett DeBoer. Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1996. xviii+351 pp. Illustrations, maps, and index. \$29.95 paper (ISBN 0-87081-424-9).

Wyoming's average year-round wind speed of 13 mph ranks first in the nation. The last stagecoach robbery in the U.S. occurred in Yellowstone National Park in 1915. The "equality state" boasts the highest population of elk, moose, mule deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, and sage grouse in the United States. The state of Wyoming is larger in surface area than 50% of the nations of the world. These are a few of the intriguing details offered in this useful volume.

*Wyoming: A Source Book* contains a wealth of information on the "cowboy state." A retired history professor from Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming, Roy A. Jordan has done a superb job in gathering an abundance of material from state and federal agencies covering a multiplicity of topics. He summarizes his prodigious research in concise narratives. S. Brett DeBoer, also affiliated with Northwest College, has done splendid work with the layout, including a plethora of informative graphics, charts, and maps that vividly portray the author's findings up through 1993. The book does an excellent job comparing facets of Wyoming with those of other states, showing the state's unique characteristics and also its commonplace features.

Wyoming's present and past economy has been based largely on extractive industries. Jordan focuses sharply on some of the most relevant issues surrounding this fact, including land use and distribution, availability of water, agricultural production, conservation and wildlife, and mineral usage. He also gives sufficient attention to the state's politics and government, population statistics, social services, life and health issues, Native Americans, and education. Other brief chapters analyze marriage and divorce rates, crime, the highway system, and environmental protection. Specialized articles address contemporary issues such as wild horse populations, Bureau of Land Management grazing fees, federal and state expenditures, and reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone National Park. A collection of miscellaneous trivia concludes the work.

Unfortunately, information on individual counties and major cities is inadequate. A chapter offering a brief history of the state's twenty-three counties and at least some information on their county seats and other important towns would have provided local flavor and added valuable information for residents of those counties. An extensive bibliography and index

complement the work, although Jordan and DeBoer might have used parenthetical or note citations in the text to show the exact sources from which they drew their information. And, as is the case with other source books, this work will need periodic revision. Already the facts are aging. Nevertheless, *Wyoming: A Source Book* is an indispensable resource for businesses, students, researchers, teachers, tourists, and Wyoming residents. **Jay H. Buckley**, *Department of History, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*.

**Prairie Night: Black-footed Ferrets and the Recovery of Endangered Species.** Brian Miller, Richard P. Reading, Steve Forrest, with foreword by Mark R. Stanley Price. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996. Xvii+254 pp. Photos, illustrations, maps, references cited, and index. \$34.95 cloth (ISBN 1-56098-603-4).

Many single species case studies have limited value beyond documenting a particular physical or social issue surrounding that species. *Prairie Night* is not so limited. This book provides a comprehensive literature review of the black-footed ferret and a revealing commentary on this endangered species program. The authors have integrated such disciplines as paleobiology, biogeography, physiology (reproductive, physical adaptations, etc.), behavior, conservation biology, legal issues and socio-economic studies into a fascinating look at one of North America's most secretive and endangered mammals.

This book demonstrates and documents the tangled obligate existence of black-footed ferrets to prairie dogs and humans. Dependence on the prairie dog becomes the near downfall of the ferret because of active human destruction of prairie dog colonies and through the inadvertent introduction of exotic diseases. Dependence on humans for their recovery also leaves the ferret on the edge of extinction because of complicated legal and social issues, and personal/political agendas. The authors guide the reader through this web of biological and social issues with a lesson to learn always close by and a somewhat critical look at their own participation.

This book may not be for all audiences because of the technical format in which it is written. Readers may also have some difficulty with transition from one writer to another because of the distinct writing styles and backgrounds of the three authors. However, the diversity between the authors enhances the book. While one of the authors has a broad technical understanding of the biology and behavior of the ferret, another has studied

conservation issues and theory surrounding the human dimension of endangered species, and the third provides an understanding of past, present and future legal implications.

Problems and solutions to problems surrounding the black-footed ferret recovery program are in many ways common to other critically endangered species. By candidly evaluating the black-footed ferret program's successes and failures, these authors have provided insight into possible solutions for other species. With the re-authorization of the 1973 Endangered Species Act soon to be debated, issues and implications that are discussed in this book could be very important in forming ideas for that re-authorization and to the concept of conservation itself. **Jerry L. Godbey**, *U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division, Midcontinent Ecological Science Center, Black-footed Ferret Recovery Program, Ft. Collins, Colorado.*