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Review of *Reconciling Ecosystem and Political Borders: A Legal Map* by Arlene J. Kwasniak

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Reconciling Ecosystem and Political Borders: A Legal Map. Arlene J. Kwasniak. Edmonton: Environmental Law Centre, 1997. xiii+200 pp. C\$29.95 paper (ISBN 0-921503-56-3).

In language accessible to the lay public, Arlene Kwasniak's *Reconciling Ecosystem and Political Borders: A Legal Map* provides an overview of the bewildering array of legal rights and legislative dictates that influence the ability of land managers to develop scientifically rational programs for ecosystem protection. The book's stated purposes are "to identify and describe all of the numerous ways those with legal rights to affect an ecosystem may affect it, and to try to figure out how to coordinate these numerous ways to maintain and restore ecosystems." The volume focuses deliberately on the use of law to protect ecosystems and largely restricts itself to details of law in the Canadian province of Alberta in the northwest extreme of the Great Plains.

Opening with definitions of key terms and a description of an Aspen Parkland ecosystem in Alberta used as illustration, the book proceeds to a section entitled "Legal Rights to Manage," a descriptive primer outlining the various public, private, and legislative rights and powers that permit the management and control of land and resource use, ranging from timber permits and pipeline easements to grazing leases and trapping licences. The following chapter outlines various kinds of legal tools available to influence land use, such as contracts, leases, zoning laws, and parks designations. Both sections highlight those aspects of right-of-use or management with the greatest potential to influence ecosystem protection. Since much of this material is based on Alberta legislation, it is most useful to natural resource managers within that jurisdiction. Nevertheless, by illustrating the plethora of instruments and rules that operate within one political area, the chapter provides a useful checklist of the variety of interests with which land managers in any part of the Great Plains may need to become familiar.

Chapter four details a particular legal tool for ecosystem protection: the conservation easement. Familiar in the United States, conservation easement legislation is new in Canada, and little, to date, has been written about

it. Kwasniak's approach is something of a "how-to" guide, designed to familiarize the reader with the mechanics of creating conservation easements in Alberta as well as outlining their conservation potential. It is followed by a chapter on the powers and limitations of municipalities to control land use—another subject about which limited information is available in Canada.

The book's final chapter examines two ideas for bringing the various interest-holders, with their disparate rights and powers, together into a cooperative ecosystem management unit. The first model, the concept of Biosphere Reserves, was developed under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program. Unfortunately, since the program is described only briefly and the way it operates "on the ground" barely detailed, the reader will find it difficult to develop a sense of how it might actually work to accomplish the goal the author claims for it. The second idea is the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as a mechanism for coordinating information. Although such an information database clearly would be a useful aid to decision-making, the author fails to explain how one brings all the conflicting players to a coordinated plan of action in any given jurisdiction.

Overall, then, this "Legal Map" does not fulfill Kwasniak's first (and perhaps overambitious) goal of determining how to coordinate numerous powers and players into a cohesive unit for ecosystem management. Nevertheless, she has done an excellent job with her other goal: identifying and describing the ways in which those with legal rights can affect an ecosystem. The result is a work in which separate sections may prove useful to different interests: as a primer on Alberta's natural resource law; as a catalogue of Canadian legal tools; as a "how-to" guide to conservation easements; and as a rare look at the role of municipalities in environmental protection. Kwasniak has produced a book of value—the benefits of which, however, reside in its parts rather than the whole. **Elaine L. Hughes**, *Faculty of Law, University of Alberta*.