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**Home Ground: Language for an American Landscape, edited by
Barry Lopez & Debra Gwartney**

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where the Army Corps of Engineers oversees flood control while the Bureau of Reclamation oversees irrigation and the Fish and Wildlife Service oversees species habitat, for example, is unlikely to be economically efficient and reduces the benefits of federal intervention as each bureaucracy engages in its own, often competing, agendas.

O'Neill demonstrates that the current breadth of this separation was almost avoided in proposed changes under the New Deal, and also that those proposals were doomed by longstanding political lobbyist interests originating in much earlier policy fights. The details are copious, with almost every paragraph summarizing an entire research agenda.

To place these details in a more supportive and enticing format for economic historians, what should be added is that while the outcomes were political, those lobbyist interests formed chiefly due to economic failures that stemmed from attempts to capture returns from missing or imperfect property rights. The successful seizing of these property rights by certain groups determined the balance of wealth between competing interests, and today we seek to redistribute that wealth so that it includes new interests. The ability to do so will be limited by the resulting inability to plan across the divided agency mandates, the origins of which pre-date both useful economic and environmental theory and application that could increase the overall wealth available for redistribution.

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Home Ground: Language for an American Landscape. Edited by Barry Lopez & Debra Gwartney. San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 2006. Pp. 437. \$29.95 hardcover.

In *Home Ground, Language for an American Landscape*, noted nature writer Barry Lopez has brought the skill and insight of 45 authors to bear on the language that we use to describe the American landscape. Part glossary and part literary essay this book contains over 850 entries, spanning nearly 400 pages, in which a selected author provides meaning and context for a landscape term or phrase. For the scientists, lawyers, and other resource professionals that make up the audience of the *Natural Resources Journal*, this book will sit rather awkwardly on your shelf between reference textbooks and published prose. At the same time it will also provide a delightful resource for browsing the American language through new and original writings by many of our favorite American nature writers.

Modern American authors were recruited to share their love of landscape language, including Arthur Sze, Bill McKibben, Barbara Kingsolver, Terry Tempest Williams, Robert Michael Pyle, Jon Krakauer, Arturo Longoria, Conger Beasley, William DeBuys, Gretel Erlich and over thirty others. The Bibliographic Note at the end reviews the theme that weaves the authors and their entries together into a cohesive "vocabulary of place." Nearly everyone will find a favorite author who has written something new for this book, and it provides a great way to sample authors that you may not know or have only heard about in passing. The index of writers at the end provides a pithy introduction to each of the authors who contributed to the book. Black and white line drawings and relevant literary quotes are interspersed throughout the entries as well. The editors have clearly gone to great trouble to create a visual format tuned to the content and purpose of this book. It is a real pleasure to flip pages sampling words and authors or, alternatively, to plow through one "letter chapter" at a time. Your personality will likely dictate how you consume this book and whether you ever know whether you have "finished" it.

Although *Home Ground* is organized in a dictionary format, it would be misleading to describe it as a dictionary or the entries as definitions. The authors incorporate their voice, history, research, and local cultural knowledge into an entry that may span several lines or several paragraphs. The entries were reviewed by a panel of geographers for accuracy, but the authors clearly had a great deal of freedom to determine where they started and where they ended with a particular word. This huge variation in voice, scope, and focus among the authors and their entries is one facet of the book that is truly unique. Interestingly, there is no entry for the term "home ground" in this glossary of landscape terms titled *Home Ground*. If we define "home ground" as the familiar surroundings or immediate environment of "our" place then this book tries to provide a literary cross section of the North American place.

The Introduction and Bibliographic Note are short insightful essays that provide the background and motivation for this project. Lopez and Gwartney (the managing editor) weave their lifetime of travels, locations, and favorite literature together to explain when and how they realized that they could find no resource for American landscape vocabulary. They further regret the simplification of language used to describe the natural environment as a symptom of our increasing distance from the natural environment in our individual and modern lifestyles. This short section from the Introduction explains one motivation for this book that will resonate with all technical writers of natural resources;

We wanted to recall and to explore a language more widespread today than most imagine, because we believed an acquaintance with it, using it to say more clearly and

precisely what we mean, would bring us a certain kind of relief. It would draw us closer to the landscapes upon which we originally and hopefully founded our democratic arrangements for governing ourselves, our systems of social organization, and our enterprise in commerce. If we could speak more accurately, more evocatively, more familiarly about the physical places we occupy, perhaps we could speak more penetratingly, more insightfully, more compassionately about the flaws in these various systems which, we regularly assert, we wish to address and make better.

Scientists, lawyers, and natural resource policy professionals intuitively know the importance of terminology and language, the written and spoken forms of which are the basic elements of our work. While formal references to the information contained in this book are unlikely to appear in your next peer-reviewed journal article or brief to the court, I can highly recommend this creative publication to everyone that enjoys the *Natural Resources Journal*.

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Rivers, Technology and Society: Learning the Lessons of Water Management in Nepal. By Dipak Gyawali. New York: Zed Books, 2003. Pg. 281. \$75.00 hardcover.

Satisfying the world's energy demands is an omnipresent issue and, as the effects of global warming become manifest, nations are increasingly pressed to identify low-emissions energy sources. For many, hydroelectric power looms as an attractive option. In *Rivers, Technology and Society: Learning the Lessons of Water Management in Nepal*, Dipak Gyawali – water engineer, economist, and environmental activist – examines water resource management in Nepal, a land with more than six thousand rivers and streams, a people “mesmerized for the past half-century by hydroelectricity” and the “vision of becoming sheiks of Araby lolling hydrodollars from the sale of hydropower to India.”

Focusing on the last two decades, Gyawali reminds us that transforming “falling water” into resource requires more than building dams for hydroelectricity. To develop water resources, he shows, one must first grasp deeply that water does not exist in a social, political, and historical vacuum. Rather, sound water management requires thoughtful