



Winter 1981

Forest and Range Policy, Samuel T. Dana and Sally K. Fairfax

Marion Clawson

Recommended Citation

Marion Clawson, *Forest and Range Policy, Samuel T. Dana and Sally K. Fairfax*, 21 Nat. Resources J. 192 (1981).

Available at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nrj/vol21/iss1/16>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Natural Resources Journal by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu, lsloane@salud.unm.edu, sahrk@unm.edu.

FOREST AND RANGE POLICY

By SAMUEL T. DANA and SALLY K. FAIRFAX
New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1980. Pp. 458.

The book jacket, the title page, and the Preface refer to this book as the second edition or a revision of Dana's classic work with the same title. In fact, it is both more and less than one can reasonably expect in a revision or a second edition.

It is less, because the original Dana has been cut by a full third, with a great many of his enriching details omitted. Fairfax describes her treatment of Dana as applying a "veneer of interpretation" (p. xii). Although this first half of the book is a truncated version of the original, Fairfax has done a competent condensation, if it is agreed that condensation was necessary. In the process, the original Dana becomes a somewhat lengthy introduction to Fairfax's book. The reader who owns the original Dana book is well advised to retain it for the important details that this new book omits.

The latter half of the book is a detailed account of the events from 1945 to date. There is a great deal of detail for these recent years; many matters, such as clean air, clean water, coastal zone management, and endangered species legislation, are discussed. While these are not usually described as forest and range policy matters, they do have significant impact on forest and range land use and management. Fairfax correctly points out that new socio-economic-political forces greatly affect forest and range policy, and that the professional fields of forestry and range management can never be the same in the future as they have been in the past. "Resource management will never again be a relatively small and homogeneous field presided over by a loving, if irascible, patriarch" (p. 321).

Fairfax's viewpoint is that of the conservationist-liberal. Although on page 225 she says: "One of the unfortunate aspects of the extreme polarization our country experienced in the 1960s is the widespread public acceptance of the good guys and bad guys theory," her treatment is perilously close to a good guys-bad guys one. She clearly chooses sides in her "veneer of interpretation." "Recreation stands out among post-World War II developments in forest and range policy as one which is characterized by spontaneous public activity" (p. 190); "The events of 1945-1950 had amply demonstrated that the congressional supporters of the reactionary cattle operators were quite prepared to destroy an agency that did not meet their peculiar set of goals" (p. 186) and ". . . the timber industry was identified as an obvious earth destroyer" (p. 277) are samples of her "interpretive" writing. Throughout the book, she quotes from and acknowledges

the help of persons with views similar to her own, but there is almost no direct quotation from Congressional hearings, no recognition that at such hearings views substantially divergent from hers were expressed, no quotation from industry publications, and no evidence that she talked with anyone from the industries whose behavior she criticizes so strongly. Her account of those events in which I was a major participant is warped, making me suspect the accuracy of her treatments on those matters where my personal involvement was small. There is no recognition that the controversies she describes were conflicts of interest groups, with genuine conviction mingled with selfish motives on each side.

I grant Fairfax full freedom to write any kind of a book she chooses, with viewpoints, sources, and judgments of her choosing. Riding on Dana's coattails to produce her book, which she implicitly acknowledges that Dana never would have written, is distressing to those who know the original book and knew its author.

Her Appendix 1, a chronological summary of important events, is a highly useful updating of Dana's Appendix 2 of the same title, with one important exception: she omits the citations to the laws, which Dana had used and which are essential to any serious student wishing to learn more about any specific piece of legislation.

In spite of my serious reservations and my criticisms, this is a valuable and useful book. It does present an inclusive and comprehensive picture of natural resource policy of the past 35 years, which is not available in any single place elsewhere. It does have some valid and accurate insights into the events of those years. But the reader must be aware of her "veneer of interpretation." The wary reader can well start with Fairfax, largely because of her inclusiveness, but he or she would be well advised to look elsewhere for verification, correction, and supplementation.

MARION CLAWSON
Resources for the Future
Washington, D.C.