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Book review

Adaptive Governance and Water Conflict, J.T. Scholz, B. Stiftel (Eds.), *Resources for the Future*, RFF Press, Washington, DC (October 2005), 300 pp., Unjacketed Hardback, US\$ 32.95, ISBN: 1-933115-18-1; Paper Binding, US\$ 29.95, ISBN: 1-933115-19-X

Florida's natural resources have made it a water-rich state. Almost the entire state is underlain by thick marine sediments and rock that create extensive freshwater aquifers. Though none of its rivers are supplied by snow pack, water flows in most of them year round. Its 1200–1500 mm of annual rainfall is rather well distributed, and groundwater discharge supplements flow in many streams. Its humid to subtropical climate has created varied and complex ecologies with high diversity. At the same time that climate has resulted in a well developed and diverse agriculture, extensive commercial and sport fisheries, and a population growth rate near the top of the U.S. Therein lies the source for water conflict.

Developers and community leaders, anxious to see continued growth, often come into disagreements with landowners who have long relied on the resources for their own use and environmentalists who seek to retain Florida's rich natural heritage. The state has the good fortune of having only two upstream and no downstream states, but even those few borders have created headaches for them. What makes the state so interesting to policy analysts and water managers is the varied ways that Floridians and their neighbors have attempted to grapple with internal and external water conflicts.

The editors of this very accessible text on water resource management present a basic theme – adaptive governance – as a more stable approach to conflict resolution involving water issues. Each of its 22 chapters ties to this central theme in a carefully edited and surprisingly unified text, surprisingly unified especially given separate authorship of each chapter.

Richard Hamann, author of the first chapter establishes the framework of Florida's version of Eastern Water Law, its implementation of Federal Statutes, and the agencies and institutions involved in encoding, interpreting and enforcing that law. It does so from a present day perspective, but there is some explanation of the historical events that led to their creation, especially its Water Management Districts.

Thereafter the editors assembled eight cases of water conflict. Each had different interested parties, different issues, various regional influence areas, and various degrees of scientific evidence defining the problem. As the individual authors wade through the complex cases, they point out the roles played by scientists, agency regulators, state and local planners, water purveyors, stakeholder groups, and elected officials. They note the ways by which citizens and their government agencies come to workable, if only temporary solutions. Often these conflicts have involved litigation. Each case provides lessons for what can go wrong and what has worked in resolving these conflicts.

In the second and third section of the book, practitioners and theorists of adaptive governance build upon the lessons of the case studies. Each highlights particular challenges or offers partial solutions involved in adaptive governance. In a central chapter, Lawrence Susskind points out that it is only through adaptive government that lasting solutions can be reached. He notes four conditions necessary for adaptive government: involvement of self-selected stakeholder representatives, adequate technical support provided to all parties, neutral facilitation, and explicit experimentation and joint fact-finding. Sadly he notes that none of Florida's water disputes have used all of these elements, and he poses the question of what will happen if the state does not move in this direction.

In the summary, the editors John Scholz and Bruce Stiftel offer an optimistic view that Florida will continue to move in the direction of adaptive government. They outline what will be needed to achieve a stable yet continually responsive water governance system. They draw upon both the case studies and the analyses presented by preceding authors.

The text is suitable for an educated audience. It would be especially useful to those charged with comprehensive water planning, as well as those attempting to resolve individual water disputes. The text could readily serve as required reading in an upper level or graduate course in natural resource management as well as for courses in public policy and administration. Common terminology is used throughout the book. It uses a single list of references and provides a detailed subject index. Despite its sole focus on Florida, the types of water issues and conflicts and the analyses and recommendations for adaptive governance are really universal.

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