

Review: Conservation and the Law: A Dictionary

By Debra L. Donahue

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Donahue, Debra L. *Conservation and The Law: A Dictionary*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO Inc., 1998. 380pp. US\$39.50 cloth ISBN: 0-87436-771-9. Acid-free paper.

Based on the premise that "familiarity saves ecosystems," Donahue clarifies the often-confusing world of conservation law for readers with little or no legal experience. She attempts to capitalize on the notion of Harvard conservation biologist Edward O. Wilson, which he stated as, "the better an ecosystem is known, the less likely it will be destroyed." Donahue does an excellent job of making conservation law "better known," and hence more effective, by explaining the origins of conservation law, providing 242 succinct definitions of terms related to conservation, and utilizing a number of practical tools to make her book more useful to land use managers, students, and anyone interested in preserving the extensive natural resources found across the United States.

In order to appreciate more fully the rich historical heritage and growing complexity associated with conservation law, Donahue paints a vivid, though concise, picture of how conservation law originated in this country. More than a list of relevant laws, this introduction offers an examination of the players involved, the philosophical basis for their actions, dominant themes, and the varied nature of the law itself that forms the backbone of the conservation movement here. Though Donahue's selection of topics is limited to the United States, the complexity associated with conflicts between public and private interests, multiple uses and users, as well as judicial decisions and executive orders, makes for a text where one could easily go astray. However, Donahue makes excellent use of many examples to distinguish important points from the less important details that often cloud the issues.

An alphabetical list of topics constitutes most of the text in this book and focuses on federal laws and policies, though some topics relative to local and private environmental issues are included. She does not include international or tribal topics, nor issues related to pollution or hazardous wastes. The reader is referred to *Environment and the Law: A Dictionary*

(1995), which is a companion text in the series "Contemporary World Issues." Entries include specific laws, conservation organizations, political figures, government agencies, legal doctrine, resource management techniques, and fields of applied science. Many useful aids, such as a subject index, lists of acronyms, regulations, statutes, and cases, as well as a bibliography of additional resources, conclude the volume.

Donahue's background as associate professor of law at the University of Wyoming plus her experience in private practice and as staff counsel for the National Wildlife Federation qualify her to write this helpful reference work. While her book reflects a "Western states bias" due to the extensive amount of federal land found in this region, she has been careful to include legal terms and concepts that readers across the country will find useful. Entries are easy to understand and offer numerous "see also" references for efficient crosschecking.

I recommend this text for land use managers and environmental activists, as well as for academic, public, and special libraries whose collections reflect a high interest in environmental issues.

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