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Christopher W. McVoy, Winifred Park Said, Jayantha Obeysekera, Joel A. Van Arman, Thomas W. Dreschel. *Landscapes and Hydrology of the Predrainage Everglades.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011. Illustrations, DVD. 576 pp. $85.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8130-3535-2.

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In Search of the Untouched Everglades

Just suppose one wanted to restore part of what is left of the Everglades to its mid-nineteenth-century self. What would that healthy condition be? How would the hydrological system work? What would the landscape look like? What plants would make their home there? Those were the questions faced by scientists of the South Florida Water Management District. With the data on hand providing little insight of a time a hundred years before remote sensors could peer down and provide a high-flying bird's-eye view of what had been a vast, largely impenetrable area, they were compelled to use sources that are more familiar to historians: newspaper articles, diaries, eyewitness accounts of travelers, and early surveyors' notes and maps. The resulting analysis and synthesis of these disparate data sources presents a fascinating look into the Everglades' past that should be an important source of background information for environmental historians of this region. It also provides an example of how the solutions to big-picture problems would be well served by including scholars from disciplines representing the humanities, social sciences, and the sciences.

The authors of *Landscapes and Hydrology of the Predrainage Everglades* are all current or former scientists of the South Florida Water Management District and represent three disciplines: soils, botany, and hydrology. Their mission is to create an "internally consistent, spatially explicit, scientifically detailed description of the predrainage Everglades from firsthand, though not specifically scientific, historical observations" (p. 291). They have been admirably successful in this well-written and illustrated book that is accessible to historians and policy makers, as well as to the scientific disciplines from which it arose.

This "diagnostic ecohistory" may be broken down into four sections: sources and methods; Everglades drainage and its effects; reconstruction of the Everglades' six different landscapes (considered individually); and finally an overview of the entire predrainage hydrology of the Everglades (p. xviii). It finishes with an eight-page summary of the entire book, providing a "quick look" source for a reader who needs information on a particular topic.

Chapter 1 ("Sources and Methods") may offer the most important information for historians. The authors provide an in-depth, useful discussion of their sources and the methods they used to synthesize and analyze information found therein. Not only do they summarize source content, but they also provide information about the authors of major works, offering much-needed context for those confronting unfamiliar sources. Although some of the scientific discussion is somewhat technical, it will provide environmental historians with important insight into possible sources and how they might be used. I was particularly impressed with their work on (for scientists) atypical sources (newspapers, letters, diaries, and photographs) that are routine sources for historians. The authors handled these sources with historical care, considering the context in which they were written and developed, using different methods of analysis based on the source type, and conducting extensive comparisons to contemporaneous accounts to check for accuracy. They describe this work as "forensic ecology" and they are to be congratulated for their attention to such a wide range of sources and their documentation.

The remaining chapters contain significantly more scientific detail and historians may find them to be a bit more "down in the sawgrass" than they need for their purposes. However, the ample, well-labeled illustrations should help the history reader sort out the more technical details of the water drainage process from the Everglades, the effects of that drainage, the hydrology of the

region, the soils and plants that formed the original landscape, and the locations of where to find more detailed data sources if needed.

The book also contains a supplemental DVD that contains two files. The first provides typed versions of their historical sources in a searchable PDF that are tied to specific chapters. Interested researchers can tap in keywords or the names of individuals, and find the original sources for nineteenth-century observations of the Everglades. The second file contains figures and data tables keyed to specific pages in the book. Both files could be particularly useful in the classroom, since students could be provided with primary sources that could be used to spur written or oral discussion.

The beautifully produced *Landscapes and Hydrology of the Predrainage Everglades* is a welcome addition to both the scientific and environmental history literature of the Everglades, and provides an excellent template for how similar work could be undertaken in other areas where landscape restoration is being proposed.

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