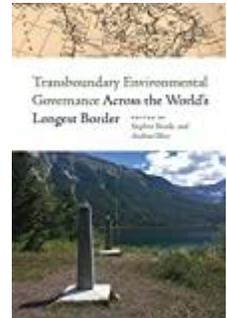


Stephen Brooks, Andrea Olive, eds. *Transboundary Environmental Governance across the World's Longest Border*. Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2018. 260 pp. \$39.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-88755-829-0.



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Ecosystems, watersheds, animal species, and air flows challenge national environmental governance because of their “borderless character” (p. ix). Stephen Brooks and Andrea Olive have assembled a thoughtful collection that explores how local, regional, subnational, tribal, national, and nongovernmental organizations in the United States and Canada have worked to manage shared environmental resources. Eight case studies from the Great Lakes and the North American West, along with a scholarly introduction and conclusion, recount problems and solutions that emerged in relation to water allocation, environmental deterioration, and climate change. The editors, political scientists, have assembled authors also trained in public administration, natural resource and sustainability management, and environmental law, history, and economics. The collection originated in a 2008 conference sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson Center and joins several recent scholarly collections, which, together, mark the one hundredth anniversary of the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty (BWT) between the

United States and Canada and the International Joint Commission (IJC) created by the treaty.[1] This collection is an assessment tool for the current state of the field. The editors and many of the authors conclude that the IJC is “much less relevant” today, in part due to advances in ecological understanding and in part “because water is no longer *the* issue in environmental policy” (pp. xii, 238). Still, the IJC lurks in all the chapters as a precedent-setting historical resource for understanding the evolution of transboundary governance and associated problems and as a useful, positive reporting and information-gathering body that might possibly—with uncertain reform—become relevant again.

Half of the essays discuss Great Lakes governance. Brooks examines the structure and history of the IJC through interviews and research on the ninety-two Americans and Canadians who have served on the commission and the issues that emerged during their service. It appears that neither the United States nor Canada has brought the most difficult and politicized issues before the

IJC; Brooks cites federalism and the divergent interests of national, regional, state, and provincial governments as one hurdle and “submergence under a tide of competing cross-border processes and institutions,” due to the growing complexity of environmental issues, as a second hurdle (p. 25). Daniel Macfarlane and Noah D. Hall emphasize the legal foundation and “culture of cooperation” fostered by the IJC (p. 32). The commission focused on resource development, such as the mid-twentieth-century Niagara Diversion Treaty and St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Project, for its first half century and protection, through new administrative bodies, such as the “Great Lakes Compact” and “Great Lakes Agreement” between states and provinces, the second half century. Notably, more recent administrative structures did not include federal governments but did require “consultation” with recognized Indigenous tribes. A particularly thoughtful piece, by Marc Gaden and Charles C. Krueger, suggesting the best of current governance strategies—the entities that are replacing, perhaps growing out of, the original IJC mission—discusses the nonbinding agreement that considers the health and regulation of the Great Lakes Fishery. A series of lake-specific and technical committees, which include state, provincial, tribal, and federal actors, use commitment to communication processes and shared issues-based identities “to promote the translation of science into management” (p. 60). An essay on the creation of a Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, by Carolyn Johns, demonstrates the ongoing research function of the IJC, which identified and has continued to report on over forty polluted sites, unfortunately, with little power to enforce cleanup.

The second half of the collection discusses IJC water management in the North American West and considers energy management when climate change, rather than water allocation or protection, is the priority. Timothy Heinmiller’s study of governance of the St. Mary, Milk, and Souris Rivers in the transboundary northern prairie and plains re-

gion, of original 1909 BWT concern, demonstrates shifting governance priorities from resource allocation to “conservation and sustainability,” especially important because climate change is expected to reduce the water supply of already fully allocated river resources in the future (p. 124). Heinmiller’s analysis further suggests how the IJC may remain relevant through a process of “institutional layering” (p. 130). Donald K. Alper’s essay on Pacific West governance issues illustrates the potential of IJC and yet its tendency to be ineffectual. In one instance, when nongovernmental organizations, Indigenous nations, and Alaskan politicians called on the US and Canada to ask for IJC involvement in mining pollution, neither did. Despite mutual interests of Washington, British Columbia, and the Indigenous-led Coast Salish Gathering in the binational Salish Sea ecosystem, an Environmental Cooperation Council has not (so far) led to outcomes that would stop the environmental decline of the Salish Sea, due to funding, leadership, and political problems. Alper points out, at base, the IJC does not include an “overarching framework for environmental management of the ecosystem encompassing Native and non-Native people” (p. 163). Two case studies examine issues that emerged, first, with the Wolf Island Wind Facility and the Keystone Pipeline and, second, attempts to promote a low-carbon economy through the Western Climate Initiative (California, Quebec, and Ontario) and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont) and argue that governance innovation, in light of the complexities of federalism, will happen first on the regional level.

Transboundary Environmental Governance across the World’s Longest Border provides case studies for thought about effectively managing continental environments. The collection questions the continued usefulness of the BWT but also usefully adds up to a history of the treaty and the activities of the IJC. Indeed, the role of the St. Lawrence River in the metropolitan thesis popular

among historians in the middle of the twentieth century influenced the thinking on IJC initiatives. The environmental movement in the 1970s seems to have transformed the commission's mission from water allocation to concern for the health of water in its larger ecological setting. The complexity of institutional interests explored throughout the collection do not result in clear policy pathways or tested and tried administrative mechanisms.

Note

[1]. See Lynne Heasley and Daniel Macfarlane, eds., *Border Flows: A Century of the Canadian-American Water Relationship* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2016); Emma S. Norman, Alice Cohen, and Karen Bakker, eds., *Water without Borders? Canada, the United States, and Shared Water* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); and Neil Craik, Isabel Studer, and Debora VanNijnatten, eds., *Climate Change Policy in North America: Designing Integration in a Regional System* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

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