

problems of environmental valuation, associated particularly with complexities of individual rationality and preference formation. Yet these issues are at the core of lots of environmental economics thinking today, both within mainstream thinking and in the 'heterodox' schools of thought, such as the various strands of institutional and ecological economics. Institutionalism is not mentioned in the book and ecological economics is mentioned in passing, falsely reduced to a point of view advocating the 'strong' concept of sustainability.

The second omission is perhaps the most problematic one. While the authors rightly argue that economic logic is but one among many to be applied in decision-making, they fail to recognize the unavoidably political role of economics in the broader policy context. By portraying environmental economics as a neutral discipline and arguing that economics simply provides but one logical and rational perspective on complex environmental policymaking, the authors overlook the power of modern mainstream economics in framing the debate and influencing the criteria of 'rationality'. Hence, this otherwise extremely well written book ends up perpetuating the illusion not only of economics as a neutral 'scientific' discipline, but more generally, of the possibility of the expert as a neutral outsider, standing apart from the messy world of politics.

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### Wetland Drainage, Restoration, and Repair

BY THOMAS R. BIEBIGHAUSER

ix + 241 pp., 28.5 × 22 × 2 cm, ISBN 978 0 8131 2447 6 hardback, US\$ 50.00, Lexington, USA: The University of Kentucky Press, 2007

'For centuries the drainage of wetlands has been seen as a progressive, public spirited endeavour, the very antithesis of vandalism' (Baldock 1984). How different is the view today, underpinned by both the increased wealth of evidence of the true value of the services provided by the natural functioning of wetland ecosystems and profiled by an increasing number of influential statements from both scientists and policy-makers.

Key analyses such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) and individual national inventories have emphasized the importance of wetlands, not only for wildlife, but also human welfare and environmental security. There is therefore considerable interest in their restoration and/or creation after a legacy of human modification and destruction.

In the first half of this text, Biebighauser traces the story of wetland drainage for agriculture and, in the second half, provides guidelines for converting dry or previously drained land to wetland. His aim is to help the reader build wetlands, based at least partly on a better understanding of how they were altered in the first place.

This is not a scientific treatise but, many will argue, much more useful. It focuses on the practical, not the academic, and the excellent array of photographs and diagrams provides clear

understanding and guidance on techniques used and proposed. The many examples of early writings describing the rationale and approach to drainage provide insight into the thinking of those early pioneers of agricultural reclamation. The author concludes that 'the drainers of wet land were kind, hardworking, intelligent people who placed a much higher value on fields that could be farmed'. New knowledge has certainly helped to better inform such decisions and Biebighauser's text is a valuable addition to the literature in showing how restoration can be achieved in practice.

The text relies heavily on actual case studies and examples, strengthened by reported conversations with those involved. It provides guidance on the many steps necessary to achieve a successful outcome. All the material comes from the USA and is written within that legislative and regulatory framework, particularly related to the Clean Water Act, permitting and the concept of jurisdictional wetlands. Whilst this emphasis makes the book of greatest interest to the North American reader, it is not without relevance to a wider audience. It manages to capture the real challenges of wetland recovery and how to meet them, using machines, human determination, skilful observation of terrain and the practical need for fund-raising. Wetland scientists, conservation and natural resource managers and water engineers are just some who will find the book a very useful practical guide and reference.

### References

- Baldock, D. (1984) *Wetland Drainage in Europe*. London, UK: IIED/IEEP.  
Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Wetlands and Water. Synthesis*. Washington, DC, USA: Island Press.

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### Peace Parks: Conservation and Conflict Resolution

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xx + 406 pp., 22.7 × 17.8 × 2.1 cm, ISBN 978 0 262 51198 8 paperback, US\$ 29.00/GB£ 18.95, Cambridge, MA, USA/London, UK: MIT Press, 2007

National parks, biosphere reserves and similar protected areas (in the present volume referred to as 'environmental conservation zones') contribute importantly to the preservation of the ever more beleaguered wild plants and animals with which humankind shares this planet. The many thousands of kilometres of national boundaries that separate the 193 or so intensely sovereign nations (with at least half of those boundaries remaining undefined or contested) have become established over the years in large part without consideration of habitat or ecosystem boundaries. Moreover, a state's boundary regions are often comparatively undeveloped, lightly populated and