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Cover
Cover illustration by Joann Schissel
JOURNAL OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

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Journal of Soil and Water Conservation (ISSN 0022-4561) is published six times a year in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Soil and Water Conservation Society, 7515 N.E. Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764. Second class postage paid at Ankeny, Iowa, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, 7515 N.E. Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764. Copyright ©1999 by the Soil and Water Conservation Society. SWCS assumes no responsibility for statements and opinions expressed by contributors. Address all editorial and business correspondence to Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, 7515 N.E. Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764. Telephone (515) 289-2331; Fax (515) 289-1227. Subscription is by membership in the Soil and Water Conservation Society or by subscription. Membership dues are $49 a year ($59 outside the United States and Canada); subscriptions are $45 a year ($57 outside the United States and Canada). Institutional subscription rates are $48 and $60 respectively.
To the editor:

This is a response to Dana Walker's letter in the November-December 1995 issue of the JSWC. Mr. Walker is missing the point! "Official" state symbols are designated to recognize the importance of a state's natural resources. Whether the state bird of Illinois is the cardinal or robin, the state animal the white-tailed deer or the red fox, or the state soil Drummer silty clay loam or Ipava silt loam, really doesn't matter. What is important is that a bird, an animal, and a soil are selected to represent the wildlife and soil resources of the state.

An "official" state soil provides organizations like SWCS a symbol to use in their educational efforts.

We have not had an "official" state soil designated in Illinois because we have some legislators and other individuals in the state who do not understand the concept of "representing the resource." They are more concerned with whether the state soil is Drummer or Flanagan or Ipava, instead of recognizing the education potential in having an "official" state soil—no matter which soil is it!

The Illinois Soil Classifiers Association (ISCA) has been pursuing state soil legislation for ten years now. In 1985 they established ten criteria they felt should be considered in selecting a state soil to represent the resource. The eight criteria are prairie soil, prime farmland, extensive acreage, "type location" in Illinois, classification, long history of use, name recognition, and parent material (loess).

Seven soils (Cisne, Drummer, Flanagan, Hoyleton, Ipava, Sable, and Saybrook) were nominated by the ISCA membership, and in 1987 ISCA members selected Drummer, by a 2 to 1 margin, over Cisne to represent Illinois' soil resources.

After legislative attempts to officially designate Drummer the state soil failed in 1990 and again in 1991, ISCA went back to the drawing board to garner additional support for another legislative try. In 1992, the Illinois Association of Vocational Agricultural Teachers sponsored a state soil election in their classrooms. Drummer was a 2 to 1 winner over Sable in those elections. In 1993 at the FDA State Convention, Ipava nosed out Drummer as the favorite of FDA delegates. At the 1993 statewide 4-H Youth Conference, Drummer was selected by the 4-Hers as the soil to be designated state soil.

Drummer seems to have broad support as the soil to best represent the soil resources of Illinois. Mr. Walker has his favorite soil and it's not Drummer. But that's okay. Let's put opinion and emotion behind us and designate an "official" state soil for Illinois!

Robert M. Leese
Monticello, Illinois

Pen Points is a forum for readers to comment on material that has been published in the JSWC or on land and water management issues in general. Readers are invited to express their views in a letter to the editor. Letters are judged on their clarity and pertinence to natural resource issues. Long letters may be shortened. Send letters to Editor, JSWC, 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764; fax (515) 289-1227; email swcsjswc@netins.net

—Pen Points Editor

Water Supply Planning examines current trends in water supply planning that have evolved in response to the changing political and economic climate of the world, moves on to addressing key planning concepts, and conclude by examining what changes the author believes the next twenty years will bring to the industry.

The book is likely to be of interest to engineers, planners, water superintendents, government and regulatory officials, water plant operators, utility managers, administrators, and others faced with the daily task of furnishing or ensuring supplies of high quality water to the public. The discussion of the global water situation at the beginning, and the author's look into the future at the end of the book is interesting, well done, and would attract a broad audience. The majority of the book deals with the key issues and concepts, and is intended primarily for the water supply planning professional.

Prasifka says the primary issue faced by water managers today is the need for reliable forecasts of water needs. Inaccurate forecasts lead to severe economic and environmental costs. Yet throughout his discussion of the various components of water supply planning, he notes the general lack of good, long-term data.

If one could look at this planet from space, it appears blue as a result of the vast quantities of water stored in the oceans, which cover a majority of the planet's surface. Unlike other natural resources, water is renewable, and is continuously converted from one state to another through nature's hydrologic cycle.

Global municipal water use is estimated to be 35 times today what it was three centuries ago. Withdrawals from the world's rivers, streams, lakes, and aquifers have been increasing 4 to 8 percent a year in recent decades. About 40 percent of the water withdrawn is returned to the water cycle as wastewater. Prasifka says our freshwater resources are under increasing stress. Currently about two-thirds of global withdrawals are used for agriculture, and one-fourth for industry. While agricultural withdrawals are projected to increase only slightly, industrial withdrawals will likely double. Our earth holds about 10 times the amount of water to meet our needs, however it is not evenly distributed over populated areas. Worldwide use has tripled since the 1950s, and the author says 26 countries now have more people than their water supplies can support.

Prasifka takes us on a worldwide tour, describing the water supply situation in India, Afghanistan, Iran, The Philippines, Viet Nam, Germany, France, Poland, China, Russia, Mexico, and Australia. These examples illustrate that in many countries of the world there is still a vast potential for developing their available water resources. Our growing population and increasing industrial and domestic water use require managers to have long-range water supply plans in place. France's system of giving local communities the power to choose between direct and delegated management is interesting. Many French communities delegate their system management to private companies, which have become multinational holdings. The different characteristics of the French water industry provide an extraordinary magnitude to one of the driving forces of water industry evolution—the technology push—and have stimulated competition between the large utilities of each European country.

The author then spends much of the book describing water supply planning components, and what information is needed to do the best job of forecasting. He goes into water demand components and forecast methods, and gives some hints as to where data sources exist. He also describes the impacts of water conservation and water quality in some detail.

Of all the factors that affect water use, price frequently is the only one that the utility has the power to change. Prasifka presents a brief history of water pricing, a description of current pricing policies, and a procedure for implementing a self-sustaining pricing policy (full-cost water pricing). Historically water rates have not been based on the full cost of providing water.

The section on water-lifeline services necessary for the survival of a community) hazard mitigation is very thorough. Most water utilities are routinely subjected to hazards, and the disaster effects are much less identifiable with a specific disaster than most people would expect. Recent earthquakes in California and the 1993 Midwest flood should give the author more information than was available to him for this edition. Even drought management and social objectives are discussed very thoroughly. He points out that social and environmental objectives and constraints must be recognized in planning, and suggests that we need to create the discipline of ecological engineering and offer degree programs in it. It would combine civil and environmental engineering with other disciplines such as biology, chemistry, and ecology.

Prasifka closes by looking ahead twenty years. He points out that we will experience five times as much change as we have had in the last 100 years, with an exponential growth in technology-based industry.

A paragraph from John Steinbeck's East of Eden is used by the author as an introduction to the topic. It is extremely well chosen. Steinbeck said, "I have spoken of the rich years when rainfall was plentiful. But there were dry years too, and they put a terror in the valley...........And it never failed that during the dry years the people forgot about the rich years, and during the wet years they lost all memory of the dry years. It was always that way." Prasifka does a nice job or reminding us of the dry years, and how to plan for them.

- Review by John W. Peterson, Watershed Programs Specialist, National Watershed Coalition, Lakewood, Colorado (John resides in Burke, Virginia).

General


The Native Plant Primer (Stock #2150). By Carole Ottesen. 368 pp., 1995. American Society of Landscape Architects, Washington, D.C. Contact ASLA, P.O. Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20604-0753; phone 800-787-2665. $50.00 hardbound.


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