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Cynthia Barnett, *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S.*

great man, Mark Wilmer, the attorney whose perseverance and legal acumen changed the course of history.

Risa Borowick

Cynthia Barnett, *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S.*, The University of Michigan Press (2007); 239 pp; \$24.95; ISBN 0-472-11563-4, hard cover.

Mirage tells the story of how Florida's continued development of wetlands into residential neighborhoods created water shortages and other problems similar to ones seen in the arid American West. By draining its once abundant water, Florida has not left enough ground water to support its ever-growing population. Barnett compares Florida's water policy with that of other states and poses two key questions: (1) will Eastern states, and specifically Florida, learn from water management mistakes made in the West, and when faced with the new problem of water scarcity; and (2) will Florida learn that continued development does not need to include higher rates of water consumption.

Barnett, a reporter for *Florida Trend* magazine, contends that throughout its history Florida sought to drain its many wetlands to allow more development and never properly considered the long-term effect of such a policy. *Mirage* explains how developers depleted Florida's fresh water supply in order to create increasing numbers of residential and commercial developments. The book discusses the dangerous consequences of such a policy and analyzes how water scarcity leads to conflict and controversy. Thus, *Mirage* provides a comprehensive look at how in one hundred years, Florida's biggest problem shifted from having too much water to not having enough.

Chapter one, "History & Myth," examines Florida's history of draining and filling in its once expansive wetlands. Since the turn of the twentieth century, through the development of Disney World in the 1960s, to the present day, Florida dredged, drained, and depleted its once vast water resources. By taking a historical look at the development of Florida, the book creates its central theme that the idea of Florida having a limitless supply of water is simply a "mirage."

Chapter two, "Conspicuous Consumption," compares America's water usage with Florida's much more wasteful policy. Specifically, over the last thirty years, U.S. water consumption has declined. Conversely, in Florida over the same period both per-person and total freshwater withdrawals have increased as a result of population growth and increased development. The chapter ends by discussing that as a result of such reckless use of water, Florida now consumes more groundwater every day than its water cycle replaces.

Chapter three, "Drained & Diverted," provides lessons to be learned from the American West's policy of using more water than its

rivers provide and describes how Florida appears headed in the same direction. By failing to carefully control water usage, Florida is setting itself up for a host of problems, such as depleted water supply, loss of organic soils, and salt water intrusion into fresh water. The chapter concludes by noting that Florida's reckless water policy has not only decreased its water supply but also has changed its weather patterns.

Chapter four, "The Wetlands & the Weather," describes the dangerous consequences of draining wetlands to further develop an area. Drying up wetlands decreases rain fall and also removes natural protection from hurricanes. The chapter uses the massive destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina as an example of what can happen when states drain coastal wetlands and as a result remove natural barriers that protect inland areas from hurricanes.

Chapter 5, "Red State, Green State," discusses Florida Governor Jeb Bush's changing views toward environmental and specifically water issues. After a failed gubernatorial campaign in which Bush opposed environmental reform, he changed his environmental views and would leave office twelve years later with a "green reputation." The chapter examines what led Bush to alter his environmental views and how, despite that change, environmental issues continue to take a back seat to economic development in Florida.

Chapter 6, "Destination: Florida," analyzes how developers influence Florida's water policies. The chapter also examines how developers continue to gain power as development has replaced agriculture as the second largest industry in Florida. That changing dynamic allowed developers to influence both state and national water policy by using environmental projects as a way to increase urban water supply.

The book shifts gears and focuses on conflicts and controversies arising out of water scarcity in chapter 7, "Water Wars." The chapter discusses water conflicts between Southern states fighting over the Chattahoochee and Flint rivers, North and South Florida fighting over the Suwannee River, and the Great Lakes region preparing for battle when other parts of the United States seek new water sources. The common thread to each water war is that as water becomes increasingly scarce, the number of water wars is likely to increase.

Chapter 8, "Business in a Bottle," examines the bottled water industry and demonstrates how bottled water is often less pure than tap water. Also, the chapter investigates why bottled water is now a status symbol and concludes by considering if America can ever value water outside the bottle with as much enthusiasm as it values bottled water.

Chapter 9, "Priceless," investigates the unique economics of water and why poor people pay more for water than the rich. The chapter uses Palm Beach County, Florida, as an example because the farmers on the west side of the county pay twice as much for water as the wealthy residents on the eastern side. Barnett contends such a scenario exists because the price of water is based on politics not economics. As

a result of those politics, governments set the price of water in wealthy areas low to appease wealthy voters. The chapter concludes by considering how the scarcity of water might cause it to become the oil of the twenty first century.

Chapter 10, "Water Wildcatters," evaluates how speculators in Florida and other states and around the world are positioning themselves to profit from expected future water shortages. The chapter considers how corporate raider Boone Pickens purchased vast acres of water rights in expectation of future shortages. Pickens expects to make huge profits because he believes water will be bought and sold as a commodity in the near future. The chapter concludes by examining the potentially dangerous consequences of such a scenario in which those in need might not be able to access clean water.

Chapter 11, "Technology's Promise," assesses two potential technological solutions to the water shortage problem: underground storage and saltwater desalination. The book provides examples of unsuccessful attempts of each technology in Florida and raises concerns that the technology might aggravate water supply problems by allowing more people to inhabit places that do not have enough water to support population increases.

Chapter 12, "Redemption & the River of Grass," provides hope for the future of Florida's water by discussing ongoing efforts to save the Everglades. The chapter concludes by providing numerous reasons why water is essential not just for physical well being, but also to a healthy state of mind.

Mirage logically develops and examines the numerous problems affecting Florida's water supply. By giving the reader both a historical and contemporary understanding of those problems, *Mirage* allows the reader to truly understand the severity and importance of the issues. From a legal perspective, *Mirage* foreshadows possible legal battles between states over water rights as water becomes more scarce. Thus, *Mirage* is an excellent book for any person seeking to understand how the development of Florida's once vast wetlands depleted underground water sources and caused Florida to go from a land of water surplus to a land of water shortage.

Patrick Hickey

Karin E. Kemper, William Blomquist, Ariel Dinar, *Integrated River Basin Management Through Decentralization*, Springer, Berlin (2007); 262 pp; \$129.00; ISBN 978-3-540-28354-6, hard cover.

Integrated River Basin Management Through Decentralization is a technical case study focusing on factors that increase or decrease the success of decentralizing river basin management. The editors develop an analytical framework in the initial chapters, and with their factors defined, apply the framework to eight river basins throughout the world.