

## Book Reviews

### **Forging a West that Works: An Invitation to the Radical Center.**

Edited by Barbara H. Johnson. 2003. The Quivira Coalition, Santa Fe, NM. 150p. US \$18.95 hardbound. ISBN: 0-9708264-1-9.

Many think that sustainable grazing is an oxymoron, but the Quivira Coalition says it is not. During its earlier years, ranching gained a bad reputation for overgrazing rangelands. Today, although some rangelands are still overgrazed, many are well managed and ecologically functional. Even so, the gap between reality and public opinion aptly illustrates one of the largest hurdles managers of natural resources must clear—changing the public opinion on certain practices typically looked upon as having a negative impact on environmental health.

The Quivira Coalition is doing just that. It is attempting to demonstrate the sustainability of grazing in the West. One of the coalition's recent publications, *Forging a West that Works: An Invitation to the Radical Center*, is another attempt to clear the public opinion hurdle.

In *Forging a West that Works: An Invitation to the Radical Center*, the Quivira Coalition has compiled an interesting and useful group of essays. The essays have been organized into *ranching*, *conservation*, and *science* sections based on the authors' areas of expertise, which allows the reader to get a more thorough understanding of one interest group before moving on to another. This preparation is especially useful for readers unfamiliar with ranching issues. A broad range of topics are covered, including managing during drought, weed management, the effects of grazing on endangered species, new ideas for environmentalism, and the use of science in natural resource management. Through case studies, operators are encouraged to move away from the old methods of ranching toward more unconventional methods. The case studies stress not only the positive environmental products, but also the potentially higher economic gains from unconventional grazing practices such as herding and dormant-season grazing.

Within the conservation section, new trends and the needs of environmentalists are discussed. The tools of environmentalist groups have typically been lawsuits and civil disobedience; however, the time for these methods has passed. The essays attempt to show that the time has come for cooperation, planning, and thoughtful implementation of science. Although many authors contributed to this book, an obvious consistency of philosophy mirrors the goals around which the coalition was formed.

The Quivira Coalition invites readers to the radical center—the nonconfrontational viewpoint in today's world of natural resource management. It does so by showing them the results that are possible when knowledgeable people from different interest groups work together for common goals, in this case, rangeland health and economically feasible ranching. The arguments are informative, persuasive, and effective.

Range management professionals and others concerned with our natural resources could benefit from reading this publication. Professionals in other controversy-plagued professions such as logging, fishing, and outdoor recreation could also apply the lessons presented in this book to their respective disciplines. This book can be useful to newcomers and old-timers alike, provided they have an open mind, a desire to change, and a desire to

improve the public image of resource use.—*Jason Capelli*, Washington State University, Pullman, WA.