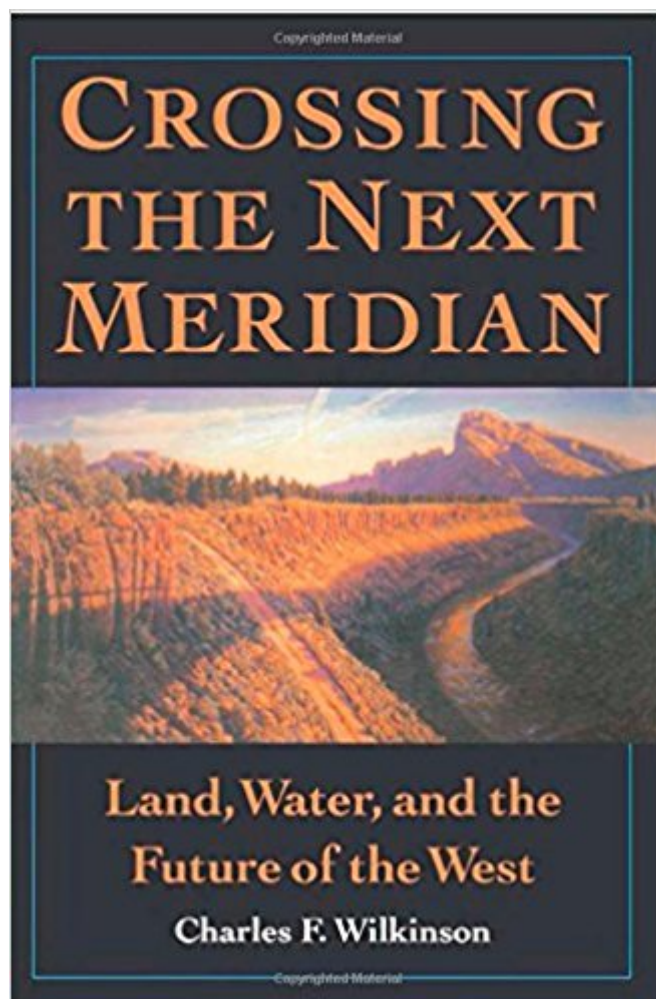


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Crossing The Next Meridian: Land, Water, And The Future Of The West



Synopsis

In *Crossing the Next Meridian*, Charles F. Wilkinson, an expert on federal public lands, Native American issues, and the West's arcane water laws explains some of the core problems facing the American West now and in the years to come. He examines the outmoded ideas that pervade land use and resource allocation and argues that significant reform of Western law is needed to combat desertification and environmental decline, and to heal splintered communities. Interweaving legal history with examples of present-day consequences of the laws, both intended and unintended, Wilkinson traces the origins and development of the laws and regulations that govern mining, ranching, forestry, and water use. He relates stories of Westerners who face these issues on a day-to-day basis, and discusses what can and should be done to bring government policies in line with the reality of twentieth-century American life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Legal scholar, environmentalist and author of *The Eagle Bird*, Wilkinson explicates basic environmental issues being faced in the American West. Natural resources, he contends, are controlled by laws, policies and regulations that, formed in the 19th century, do not embrace today's economic trends, scientific knowledge and social values. Wilkinson cites five particular areas requiring reform: the Hardrock Mining Law (1872), public rangelands, forest lands, dams and energy development. Reviewing the history and practice of Western laws and regulations, he describes their practice in specific cases today and discusses possible solutions. Wilkinson advocates that the

West give up its reliance on extractive industries and pursue instead the promise of an economy based on recreation and tourism. This important study should be read by lawmakers at every level of government. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"I know of no book about the structure, attitudes, history, and future of Western Society that does so much, so clearly, and so fairly, as this one." (Wallace Stegner)

Wilkinson's analysis of the West is a great read. It isn't so dense and inaccessible that I felt bogged down and he keeps things engaging by revealing glimpses of small town life and personal stories that tie into the greater overall picture he's weaving. His analysis looks at the history of the West through the lens of Law and policy, and it's very interesting to see what conclusions he draws. The final chapters of the book veered off a bit and I found myself disagreeing with some of his theories, but overall the book is a very interesting way to look back through the American development of the Wild West.

A bit dry. Not really what I was expecting, but I did finish it despite putting the book aside for weeks at a time before coming back to it. It's full of information -- probably more than I really wanted to get out of this book. I would have perhaps preferred the Dummies version, unless the writing was a little more interesting.

A very though look at the major issues dividing westerners today. Looks at ranching, water, and logging in a very readable style. Do not loan this one out because it NEVER get returned. The only downfall is that this book is already dated because of the rise of the Wise Use movement.

i got this book for my Land Policy class and it was surprisingly good. unfortunately i never got a chance to finish reading it but it brought up an interesting perspective on the forestry service, BLM, and the start of many other conservation organizations. its a good book to use if you are researching the history of American conservation or the reasons behind some of our laws.

A very scholarly, but accessible, history of the development of the West and the social/political/economic structures that shaped land, water and resource rights there. In particular, Wilkinson is addressing the notorious Hardrock Mining Act of 1872 (still in effect), the distribution of

land and grazing rights, the fisheries of the Pacific Northwest, and the timber industry. His analysis of the Lords of Yesterday - his term for the antiquated statutes that govern those industries - is very convincing. The book's only weakness is that this is a 1992 text (presumably researched in the decade previous) that doesn't reflect changes in the laws and political pressures over the past decade. It would benefit from a new edition.

Wilkinson offers a balanced account of the forces that created the law and policy of the American West, and also of the forces that keep those outdated policies active in a very different West. As a native of Colorado, it was apparent that Wilkinson has spent a great deal of time in the American West and truly understands the complex issues that the region faces today. Very well researched, very easy to read.

Great and informative book. Puts a lot of the problems now faced in the west into their context. Covers a lot of land history in the west not generally covered in school, but definately not a dry read!

An excellent rendition of how western law had transformend the American West into a land for humans, filled with dam after dam. Wild salmon have no where to go. Laws seem to be more powerful than Nature!

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