

BOOK REVIEWS

Coping With Droughts, V. Yevjevich, L. da Cunha, and E. Vlachos (Editors). Water Resources Publications, Littleton, Colorado 80161. 1983. 417 pages.

"Coping with Droughts" is a collection of papers presented at the NATO Advanced Study Institute at the National Laboratory of Civil Engineering in Lisbon, Portugal, in June 1980. The editors, Vujica Yevjevich, Luis da Cunha, and Evan Vlachos, have done an outstanding job of compiling and presenting various papers into a comprehensive and easily readable narrative on the subject of drought.

The hardback publication includes a number of graphs and tables to support and illustrate the points brought out in this text. The Table of Contents, Bibliography, and biographical information about the contributors are clearly presented and are in sufficient detail to be useful to the reader.

The content of the book is divided into three major parts. Part I, Introduction, consisting of approximately 73 pages, presents a multidisciplinary overview of drought. Both the characteristics and impacts of drought are discussed including physical, economic, sociological, and environmental considerations. Part II, Responding to and Mitigating Drought Impacts, consisting of approximately 140 pages, presents in more detail the characteristics of drought, methods of prediction, preparing for drought and reacting to drought. Both physical and non-physical strategies are discussed in presenting methods of preparing for drought as well as for coping with drought when it occurs. Part III, Drought Case Studies, consisting of approximately 160 pages, presents, in detail, the means of coping with drought at a number of specific areas throughout the world.

The strength of this publication is that it does not address drought from a narrow perspective. It effectively integrates information from various disciplines dealing with the characteristics and impacts of drought in a manner that should prove to be informative and helpful to all disciplines like agriculture, hydrology, meteorology.

This book is recommended for reading for those involved in efforts to alleviate the drought caused famine on the African continent and would also be of interest to all others of various disciplines concerned with the water resources throughout the world.

Drought in the Great Plains : Research on Impacts and Strategies. Proceedings of the Workshop on Research in Great Plains Drought Management Strategies held at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, March 26-28, 1979, Norman J. Rosenberg (Editor). Water Resources Publications, Littleton, Colorado, 1980.

This publication, in part the proceedings of a drought research workshop, focusses on the single issue of drought management strategies for the Great Plains, and documents research efforts covering impact and strategies.

The introduction to the text presents the efforts of the workshop organizers to define the issues to be addressed and the prerequisites for the invited attendees. Workshop format, organization, and goals and objectives are included in this chapter and Appendix B. Chapter II presents the reports of the Task Groups following the workshop, and are somewhat duplicated by the presentation of recommendations and key findings in Chapter III.

Appendix A is comprised of reports commissioned by the workshop organizers to address specific issues. Appendix B lists the workshop organization and attendees and Appendix C presents a list of publications, both published and proposed.

Four Task Groups were established for the workshop : (1) Technology, (2) Economics, (3) Political Considerations and Decision Making, and (4) Social & Informational Problems. The Task Group on Technology provided a detailed discussion of current and proposed methods to deal with drought. In addition, discussions of impediments to new technologies and requirement for support sciences and technologies are included. Economics of drought and drought prevention are discussed relative to pre, and post- drought conditions. A critical observation of this group is that the cycle is continuous, and that post-drought precedes pre-drought and is merely a semantic concept. Droughts will occur at (possibly) random intervals regardless of degree, or lack, of pre-paredness.

The Task Group on Political Considerations and Decision Making "may serve to illustrate the kinds of problems associated with multidisciplinary discussions about drought." In its attempt to determine "How do you get everybody into the Act, and still get some action" this Task Group seems to have discussed much and resolved little. One important observation was that the use, accuracy, and dissemination of information is the key to effective decision making.

The Task Group on Social and Information Problem touched upon many of the issues and concepts raised by the other groups. The net result of this discussion seems to be that it "revealed the richness of drought management strategies as a focus of research."

If the Task Group reports provided more question than answers, they are more than offset by the wealth of information provided in the Commissioned Reports in Appendix A. The lead paper

"Drought Prediction in the Great Plain : is it Feasible" by Donald A. Wilnite, provides a wealth of detail and references on the status of drought prediction. The second paper "An Historical Survey of Drought Planning With Emphasis on the U.S. Great Plains" by M.L. Quinn, presents the history of drought planning and its lack.

The third paper by Gordon McKay discusses drought mitigation with a specific emphasis on experiences in Canada. Papers four and five, respectively, provide an excellent bibliography of drought related papers, and summarizes the workshop and its impacts. The last paper "Relevance of the Workshop to "Drought Prone Regions Other Than the Great Plains" by Milo Cox actually discusses drought planning and impacts in other nations, predominately the Third World. Appendix C lists publications presented on drought and publications underway or planned.

This publication is thus a very good 'state of the art' overview of drought planning.