

Wells, Gail and Dawn Anzinger. *Lewis and Clark Meet Oregon's Forests: Lessons from Dynamic Nature*. Portland, OR: Oregon Forest Resources Institute, 2001. (Reviewed by Alexis Steinberg)

Wells' and Anzinger's book takes a fascinating and innovative perspective on the historic Lewis and Clark journey. The emphasis of this book is not on Lewis and Clark, as would be expected, but about how the earliest west-traveling European-Americans could have experienced the Northwest landscape, a landscape that existed not pure, pristine or untarnished, but naturally *dynamic* and with a long history of Native American occupation and manipulation.

The book begins with an in-depth and easy-to-understand overview of the “dynamic forests” of the Pacific Northwest. Clear and concise textual and graphical information is provided about historical climate changes, ice ages and the Milankovitch cycles and Missoula floods, glacial and post-glacial forests, ecological succession, old-growth forests, and geological change from plate subduction and natural disturbances. The book explores ecology of the Pacific Northwest forests, including forest types, disturbances and riparian forests, and fire and wind regimes. Wells and Anzinger emphasize the importance that these dynamic forces had on shaping the landscape prior to European-American settlement.

The remainder of the book is dedicated to the human ecological history of specific Northwest environmental zones. These include the lower Columbia, the lower Willamette and the Alsea Basin. The chapter on the Willamette basin focuses on the effects that European-American settlement had on the landscape as well as on the Native American population. Topics include furs, farming, settlement patterns, missionaries, Oregon City and initial towns, land use and ownership (replacement of prairies by pastures and cultivated fields), Kalapuya disease and decimation, logging, sawmills and railroads.

Critique

Wells' and Anzinger's book is a well rounded and easy to understand informational text for general audience readers. Produced within the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, this book is a credible educational tool that encourages sound forest management. The writers do an excellent job of providing a huge amount of valuable information. The latter portion of the book asks readers to utilize this information about “dynamic nature” when thinking through environmental policy proposals. I would recommend that this book be used for general information gathering only because some of the details are vague, outdated or excluded. I do, however, think that it provides a great starting point for anyone interested in the natural history of the Willamette River Basin and Northwest forests.

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