

Dennis, S. (2001). *A teaching guide to natural resources and the informed citizen*. Champaign, IL: Sagamore Publishing.

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As an instructor who sees his primary responsibility as preparing young men and women for the profession of outdoor recreation management, I am often confronted with students who have difficulty understanding the “politics of natural resource and environmental management in the United States.” Well, worry no more, as the author of the text, *Natural Resources and the Informed Citizen*, provides a wonderful introduction to the way many people, including recreation resource managers, become informed to make decisions about using and experiencing our natural resources.

While this review is to address the companion teaching guide, it is important to first understand the purposes and format of the regular text. As described in the author's words the purposes of the text are fourfold:

1. To increase awareness of the dynamic processes by which we manage natural resources.
2. To increase understanding of the government agencies, their missions, and the laws and regulations that affect natural resource management.
3. To heighten awareness of the rights and responsibilities of citizens to be involved in the planning and decision-making processes of natural resource management.
4. To enhance citizen's abilities to be effective as participants in natural resource management.

In brief, the format of the 24-chapter text breaks the book into four major parts. Introductory chapters addressing human values, pressures, and impacts of outdoor recreation associated with natural resources followed by an historical look at America's views towards natural resources make up the first part (Chapters 1 through 4). The second part discusses the various governmental institutions (e.g., National Park Service) that manage our natural resources (Chapters 5 through 13), while the third part of the book looks at citizen participation in the politics of resource management (Chapters 14

through 17). The last part of the book provides an overview of the “principal methods of forestry, range, wildlife, water, and minerals management” and presents many of the controversial issues often surrounding such resource management practices (Chapters 18 through 22). The final two chapters are brief and essentially describe an “informed citizen” given the context of the entire text. Throw in a great glossary of terms tied into the chapters and an appendix with loads of useful Internet sites and the book is complete.

As to the Teaching Guide, the author makes it very clear that the guide is designed for a semester-long course although it easily could be used for more than one semester when coupled with many of the additional resources and suggested readings highlighted throughout. The format for the teaching guide greatly complements the regular text as the guide breaks each chapter down in instructor-friendly ways.

To start, each chapter is initially overviewed in one paragraph or less followed by a discussion of core concepts and instructional objectives. For those of us who struggle developing instructional objectives relevant to reading materials assigned, the author makes it easy for they are clear, measurable, and directly linked to the corresponding chapter in the text.

Key terms are then highlighted followed by an amazing assortment of useful learning activities for application both in and out of class. Indeed, I found myself thinking about how I could incorporate some of these great activity ideas into my current environmental issues class.

Examples of out-of-class activities include students reading opposing perspectives on the management of national parks and wildlands, sending students to a state or federal agency to find out and explore the management activities employed, and having students probe web sites of prominent environmental organizations and or state/federal agencies. For instructors keen on in-class activities, the author provides a wealth of ideas sure to stir students’ interest. From a citizen activism exercise where students are asked to take on the perspective of different types of environmental groups in addressing a hypothetical plan to build a road through a roadless U.S. Forest Service area, to a mock public meeting where students take on different roles addressing the National Park Service’s Feral Burro Reduction Program, each chapter is literally filled with more useful activity ideas than could reasonably be taken on over the course of a semester. This is clearly one of the main strengths of the teaching guide, particularly for an instructor who likes to employ action-oriented learning techniques.

The next section within each chapter is where to go for additional resources. Included in this area are references to the “Suggested Readings” associated with each chapter in the text as well as numerous other useful resources ranging from web sites to videos. I will be the first to admit that I was unaware of the many videos available. Again, much like with the listing of in and out-of -class activities associated with each chapter, the additional resources list is quite useful and provides more ideas than may reasonably be incorporated into a semester long course.

The last two areas covered in each chapter review are wonderful time saving devices. Namely, the author provides potential examination questions, primarily short answer in format, as well as a series of paper overheads that could easily be copied onto transparencies and used in the classroom. The number of examination questions in each chapter varies and is readily adaptable in developing multiple choice, matching, and true/false type questions. Nothing like having a bank of good questions made available with little to no effort involved on your part!

Beyond discussion of each chapter in the format described above, the author also provides some very useful examples of written assignments, six in total, which could be infused into a course syllabus. Again, much like the examination question examples and paper overheads, these assignments are a very instructor friendly ready-to-use package of materials.

To this point in my review of the teaching guide for *Natural Resources and the Informed Citizen*, I have had nothing but praise to share for the author has provided the profession a wonderful and easy to apply companion to the text. However, I would be remiss if I didn't share my concern that the sequencing of some of the chapters in the teaching guide might warrant some attention by the potential user. Specifically, I might consider presenting the resource management practices chapters (Chapters 18 through 22) before beginning discussion as to how citizens can become involved in the politics of resource management (Chapters 14 through 17). This resequencing would also be useful since many of the federal institution/agency chapters (Chapters 5 through 13) would flow well with the resource management practices chapters given the institutions (e.g., U.S. Forest Service) dealings with such resources and controversies surrounding the management of them. Although I should point out, the author is very clear in his teaching guide discussion of many of the institutions responsible for managing our natural resources, that some of the latter chapters (Chapters 18 through 22) are particularly suitable to review as a supplement to each chapter. While I am not quite certain as to why the sequencing of the chapters is such, I suspect it may be to address some of the tools for dealing with the politics of resource management to enable students to better understand the controversies discussed in the resource management practices chapters.

In sum, the teaching guide is a grand complement to the text. The format and plethora of easy to use and apply activities, examination questions, overheads, and additional resources make for a wonderful teaching guide. This teaching guide in combination with the text provides a good introduction to many concepts needed to be understood by students within an outdoor recreation, resource management, or environmental issues related curriculum. The teaching guide and text cover subject matter that is important to students in recreation and leisure services, as well as other related disciplines, to understand in order to become effective practitioners and "informed citizens" in an era of great environmental change.