

**Lynne Heasley and Daniel Macfarlane. *Border Flows: A Century of the Canadian-American Water Relationship*.
Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2016. 336 pp. \$34.95. ISBN 978-1-55238-895-2 (Paperback)**

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Lynne Heasley and Daniel Macfarlane. *Border Flows: A Century of the Canadian-American Water Relationship*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2016. 336 pp. \$34.95. ISBN 978-1-55238-895-2 (Paperback)

Borders are back. Britain has begun exiting from the European Union, and Trump is moving ahead with his wall. Both projects illustrate the continuing appeal, for some, of sovereignty: controlling territorial exits and entries. But both ignore the flows of nature and society. Birds fly, water runs, and winds blow across borders; so do people, goods, and ideas whenever they can. Yet borders still matter. And thus the paradox: borders are invisible and permeable, yet historically consequential.

This book presents close analyses of this paradox, as experienced in the waters and landscapes of the border regions of Canada and the United States. The editors, both at Western Michigan University, have brought together in this nicely constructed volume an international cast of historians and other scholars. Their geographic interests are diverse, extending to the Pacific coast's Salish Sea, the Columbia and other western rivers, Midwestern border forests, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River (of course), and (unexpectedly) the Northwest Passage. (Unfortunately, as happens too often in such collections, the Atlantic region escapes attention.)

A few authors examine the legal and political frameworks of these border regions. The Great Lakes receive special attention: Dave Dempsey, and Noah Hall and Peter Starr discuss

in complementary chapters fitful movements towards cooperation on exploiting, allocating, and, more recently, conserving the Great Lakes—presenting histories, in effect, of efforts to balance stewardship and sovereignty. Emma Norman and Alice Cohen provide a parallel analysis of the Salish Sea, demonstrating the ecological and political implications of the boundaries that separate not just two nations but Indigenous territories and hydrologic regions. Andrea Charron's analysis of the Northwest Passage is also helpful, although she devotes too little attention to the Indigenous dimensions of northern sovereignty.

This border includes some of the continent's most manipulated ecosystems, and several authors explore the re-engineering of rivers and lakes for power and water production. Matthew Evenden provides a helpful overview, Dan Macfarlane examines American and Canadian power projects at Niagara Falls, Frédéric Lasserre profiles schemes (fantasies, really) to export water from Quebec, and Jeremy Mouat considers the Columbia River Treaty. Together these chapters illustrate the diverse intersections of political ambitions and conflicts, high modernist ideals, and local environments and social contexts.

Border ecologies also receive attention. James Feldman compares the contiguous forests of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota and Ontario's Quetico Provincial Park; these similar ecosystems provide a kind of natural experiment that illustrates the consequences of divergent social and managerial histories. Nancy

Langston demonstrates the capacity of environmental history to tell complex stories, by exploring the transformation of Lake Superior ecosystems and the collapse of lake trout populations (sea lamprey weren't the sole culprit). And in perhaps the book's most thoughtful essay, Joseph Taylor returns to the Salish Sea, using the ecology of toxic chemicals to consider the meanings of diverse kinds of borders – including those that separate ourselves from nature.

The volume concludes with a few more personal reflections, rooted in particular places. These brief essays test other borders—between scholars and citizens, objectivity and experience—presenting interesting counterpoints to the more “academic” chapters.

The theme of border regions as hybrid phenomena recurs. The

ambiguous overlapping of natural and human boundaries is often encountered. Boundaries can be presented as “natural,” even as they reflect particular social conditions or interests. Such presentations exemplify the political roles of scientists in these regions: while describing the organization of nature, they also assert the primacy of their own analysis. Another continuing theme is the necessity of examining borders at several scales – from the international to the local – while acknowledging that their regions transcend whatever scales we choose to impose on them. And finally, the paradox of borders is constantly present: we insist upon them in ordering our activities, yet our interests and impacts often express indifference.

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