

Drying Up: The Fresh Water Crisis in Florida

John M. Dunn

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Unsettling and well-documented, John M. Dunn's *Drying Up* dramatizes Florida's impending water crisis.

It is almost counterintuitive that supplying fresh water is a problem in Florida, long known for its lakes, springs, and wetlands. As journalist and water advocate John Dunn reports, however, "severe water shortages are emerging in a state that ought to be otherwise saturated." *Drying Up* explores this paradox in a comprehensive manner, examining the complexities and circumstances surrounding Florida's water crisis.

The book discusses Florida's water usage, as well as the complementary but sometimes competing roles of businesses and the government, in an eye-opening study that leaves few stones unturned. While Florida leads the country in the use of desalinated water, the state still seems to be unquenchable. One of the obvious challenges is Florida's ever-present popularity; it is the third most populated state, and tourism drives its economy.

Examining both historical and contemporary challenges, Dunn uncovers myriad contributing issues to the water crisis, including the impact of the Disney Corporation, a three-state dispute over water, and recent state legislation that "essentially allows major agricultural producers—whose fertilizer use is a top contributor to water pollution—to police themselves." All of this information is reported in well-constructed prose, fact-based and rich in detail, supplemented by numerous black-and-white photographs and water flow maps.

Dunn writes, "Much of Florida's coastal landmass is only inches above sea level," making Florida extremely vulnerable to climate change. As he observes, sea level rise, drought, and the continuing increased demand for water all contribute to a water crisis that Floridians ignore at their own peril. *Drying Up* not only documents the elements of that crisis, it sounds an eloquent alarm.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (May/June 2019)

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