

Groundwater for the 21st Century: A Primer for Citizens of Planet Earth

John A. Connors

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“Why learn about water?” asks the first sentence this scholarly and impassioned tome and then for more than 600 pages of dense prose—interspersed with charts, graphs, photographs, and the occasional chemical formula—John A. Connors proceeds to address the question.

The simple and concise answer: “The water upon which our survival depends is fresh liquid water, and some 99% of that water exists beneath the land’s surface.” Connors, who has a doctorate in geology from the University of Idaho, further instructs that rarely has so plentiful a resource been so threatened. The threats include commercial exploitation, contamination and—perhaps the greatest threat of all—by the thirst of a burgeoning human population.

Connors presumes that most “users” of his book will not be professional hydrogeologists. His goal is to provide a resource that will be helpful to those who manage water, study water, write about water, or simply delight in water with all its mysteries and benefits. He strives to be readable and yet avoid the vice of oversimplification; thus along with, for instance, chapters about the hydrologic cycle, aquifers, and contemporary groundwater supply issues, there are also chapters on vadose water and phreatic water and applied hydrogeology.

Connors, in his subtitle, calls his book “a primer.” It is rather more than that, but it will serve anyone involved in the ongoing debate over water use who strives for facts to base an opinion.

THOMAS BEVIER (Spring 2014)

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