1997


James S. Heller
William & Mary Law School, heller@wm.edu

Repository Citation
http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/libpubs/42
ENVIRONMENTAL LAW


The author states, in her preface, that this dictionary “is written for high school, college, and postgraduate students as well as researchers and people interested in environmental studies.” Certainly a wide-ranging group of people; one wonders who is not included in that group (and perhaps “middle school” could be added to the list). That said, Patton-Hulce’s dictionary provides an adequate introduction to environmental law, but really is not designed for those doing sophisticated environmental law research.

Patton-Hulce begins with a 32-page introduction to environmental law, including a snapshot of the legislative, administrative, and judicial processes. She then proceeds to define approximately 200 terms, from acid rain to wetland. Those make sense in this kind of dictionary, as do nearly all of the other definitions—which range from 40 words to several pages in length. A bit puzzling are the entries for George Herbert Walker Bush and Ronald Reagan, although one may appreciate the well-deserved criticism
of those two presidents' environmental records. The book concludes with a selective bibliography of articles and books, a brief table of federal and state court decisions, a listing of some federal environmental statutes and regulations, and a fairly thorough index.

Because Patton-Hulce's definitions are more thorough than those found in the typical dictionary, her book really is more than a dictionary. (Compare it to Neil Stoloff's more abbreviated *Environmental Law Dictionary* [Oceana, 1993], for example.) Yet it would not be fair to call it encyclopedic, either. For more in-depth treatment of environmental issues, one should look at William Cunningham's *Environmental Encyclopedia* (Gale, 1994), or the more scientific-oriented *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Environmental Science and Engineering* (3d ed.; see ARBA 94, entry 1999). The work under review does fit a niche, however, and it is recommended for school and public libraries, junior college libraries, and university undergraduate libraries. [R: Choice, May 96, p. 1455; LJ, 15 April 96, p. 74; RBB, 1 May 96, pp. 1520-21]

—James S. Heller