

Book Notices

Landforms of Iowa, by Jean C. Prior. A Bur Oak Original. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 1991. xi, 153 pp. Photographs, maps, graphs, notes, index. \$32.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY DEBBY ZIEGLOWSKY BAKER, IOWA LAKESIDE LABORATORY

Jean C. Prior, a geologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Geological Survey Bureau, has written a truly valuable book outlining Iowa's seven primary landform regions, describing in detailed yet wonderfully accessible language just how each landscape was created. From the recently deposited (12,000–14,000 years ago) Des Moines Lobe to the oldest bedrock seen on the ground surface (the Sioux Quartzite at Gitchie Manitou State Preserve in extreme northwestern Iowa that dates back more than 1.6 billion years), the evolution of Iowa's landscape is clearly explained. Each region is mapped and lavishly illustrated. Readers will be especially delighted with the chapter containing maps and lists of state parks and preserves located within each region, making it possible for readers to organize their own field trips to explore Iowa's geology firsthand.

Understanding Iowa's geology is important for three reasons. A knowledge of Iowa's subtle landscapes reveals a history of people living on the land, from prehistoric Native American tribes and early Euro-American settlers to the way Iowans use the land today. An appreciation of geological processes that created Iowa landscapes over millions of years leads to an enlarged perspective about time itself and the tremendous impact humans have had on the land in the very brief period they have occupied the earth. An understanding of Iowa's geology is also vital for citizens faced with such pressing issues as groundwater quality, soil conservation, urban sprawl, waste disposal, energy sources, and preservation of Iowa's few remaining natural habitats. How these issues are resolved will have an enormous impact on future Iowans. This book offers much to the professional scientific community as well as to general readers in understanding Iowa geology.

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