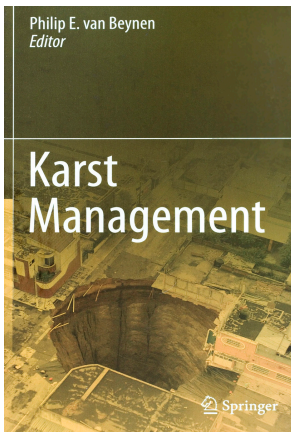


Philip E. van Beynen, editor
Karst Management

2011, Springer, ISBN 978-94-007-1206-5, 489 p.
 25 × 16 cm, hardcover, color and b/w photos and illustrations, €126 (\$170).



This book concerns the issues that relate to the special problems of living on karst lands, managing them, and preserving their integrity, as well as mitigating their hazards. With 21 chapters written by leading authorities in the field, and well illustrated with photos and diagrams, this is one of the few books on the subject and is the most comprehensive. It is a nice complement to the several more specialized books on karst hydrology, geomorphology, and engineering, such as those by Ford and Williams, Milanović, and Kresic. Each of the 25 authors is a well-known specialist who brings together concepts, field examples, and practical applications and who can supply a global perspective.

The book is divided into four parts: (1) problems of living on karst, (2) impacts on underground resources; (3) water supply and disturbance of subterranean species; and (4) examples of karst protection and enhanced public awareness. Specific chapters cover engineering issues (e.g., dams and reservoirs, land subsidence, risk assessment), human disturbance and sustainability, agricultural practice, subterranean biota, geoarcheology, management of caves and carbonate aquifers, role of karst research institutes, and public policy. Some chapters are devoted specifically to case studies, including the UNESCO World Heritage Sites devoted to karst, the cockpit country of Jamaica, Canada's Nahanni National Park, and protection of karst landscapes in the developing world. The authors emphasize that remedies to karst problems are difficult and are often applied only as a poor afterthought. Reasons include the "hidden" nature of karst and its tendency to overlap with poverty and overpopulation, accentuated by poor soil and water resources.

Even those who are familiar with karst will find much useful information in this book, such as the case histories and the specific guidelines for anticipating and remediating karst problems. Although the book is not designed to provide uniform global coverage, it contains abundant international perspectives and literature references, with authors who represent many of the classic karst regions of the world. Overall the text is well written and even the few technical parts are easily understood.

Anyone faced with the task of protecting karst resources will appreciate its guidance. This is especially true for those who have never before encountered karst in their work and are concerned about how to avoid its special problems – or more likely, how to recover when things go wrong. This book contains many well-documented and curious field examples, which offer plenty of warning to those who overestimate their professional skills. Science is held at too great a distance from politics and public awareness, and this book's thorough and common-sense approach to karst management should help to bridge this gap.

Arthur N. Palmer and Margaret V. Palmer