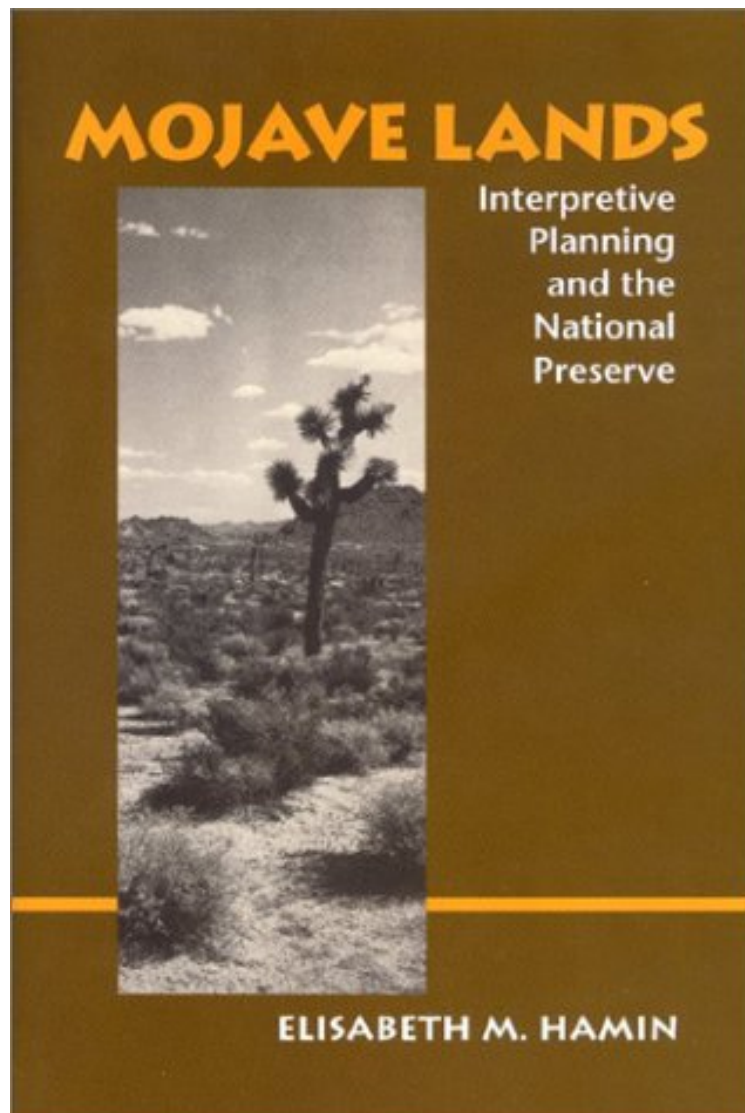


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## **Mojave Lands: Interpretive Planning and the National Preserve (Center Books on Contemporary Landscape Design)**

*Elisabeth M. Hamin*

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**Elisabeth M. Hamin : Mojave Lands: Interpretive Planning and the National Preserve (Center Books on Contemporary Landscape Design)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mojave Lands: Interpretive Planning and the National Preserve (Center Books on Contemporary Landscape Design):

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good start, bad conclusions. By Desert Rat A thoroughly disappointing book. I should have known when the author began the book by describing herself as a centrist - aka a BS artist who thinks she knows better than the crazy liberals or dumb rednecks, but understands them both. The beginning starts off with several chapters about the area now known as the Mojave National Preserve and the various groups that use the public lands there. A diverse picture is painted of many different groups who want to see many different things. There are some important groups who are wholly excluded (dirtbags, climbers, overnight campers just looking for a place to sleep, migrant workers), but many more that are included. Sadly, just as the book begins to get interesting, the author decides it is important to boil everything down into only two sides - park proponents and opponent. Then, she has the audacity to claim that these groups agreed on pretty much everything after she just got finished talking about the diversity and individual interests that different groups had. Ugh. This oversimplification at the end feels just like a lie. The individual interests in the area cannot be boiled down into such a simple argument. Then, she presents a reorganization of the argument which she considers a compromise and it just looks horrible and makes no sense. One of the biggest lowlights was saying all park proponents were from big cities and the locals were all park opponents. All this despite interviewing a proponent who lived in the preserve in a previous chapter. Her interviews for the book were more than 75% white men. The rest, white women, usually the wives of white men she talked with. She claimed that she was unable to locate any of the 25%+ minority population in the area for interviews.

Controversy inevitably accompanies attempts at land protection, even in cases of large, uninhabited, economically marginal locations. In 1994, for example, the California Desert Protection Act created the Mojave National Preserve, the third largest national park in the lower forty-eight states. The act transferred three million acres of southern California desert from the Bureau of Land Management to the National Park Service. As a result, explains Elisabeth M. Hamin, the National Park Service became a multiple-use manager, balancing its official mission of environmental protection with oversight of such activities as hunting, ranching, and mining. In *Mojave Lands: Interpretive Planning and the National Preserve*, Hamin explains how this new role came about. Drawing on interviews with people on various sides of the issue from mining lobbyists to local ecotourism operators, legislators to gun advocates she shows how the differing parties argued and compromised over land protection. From their success, Hamin derives lessons for reimagining national parks to achieve broadly shared goals. Introducing the concept of "interpretive planning" a method that takes into account conflicting views of all interested parties she offers explicit steps for the planner and policy analyst to use. This book will appeal to scholars and students in environmental studies, planning and landscape architecture and history, as well as professionals in planning, resource management, the National Park Service, and related conservation organizations, public and private.

This is a rich and rewarding book about a deeply divisive issue. I am very impressed by the extent to which Hamin interviewed key participants and let them speak for themselves. It is an important contribution to the environmental planning and land use literature. (James A. Throgmorton, University of Iowa) Hamin's narrative approach brings the human concerns of environmental conservation to the fore. *Mojave Lands* makes a compelling and original contribution to environmental planning theory and practice. (Frederick Steiner, Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin) About the Author Elisabeth M. Hamin is a member of the faculty in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.