



Great Lakes and Great Plains Virtual Book Club

The Death and Life of the Great Lakes by Dan Egan

7 PM CT/8 PM ET on April 8th, 2021

Meeting Dates and Chapters

- April 8 - Chapters 7 and 8
 - April 22 - Chapters 9 and 10 and ideas for the classroom
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 7 – North America’s “Dead” Sea: Toxic Algae and the Threat to Toledo’s Water Supply (pages 212-244)

1. Chapter 7 begins with a discussion of North America’s “Dead” Sea, which refers to Lake Erie. Here again is an example where we changed the environment for human purposes. Could people have found a different way to live with the Great Black Swamp back in the 1800’s?
2. What could have been the result if the tiles were not put in to drain the swamp?
 - Video about swamp: Hidden in Plain Sight: The Great Black Swamp of Northwest Ohio: <https://bit.ly/3wrY9bD>
3. Were you surprised to learn that Lake Erie holds only 2% of the overall volume of Great Lakes water, but is home to 50% of Great Lakes fish? Should this cause worry to us with “cultural eutrophication” occurring there?
4. In the Dr. Seuss book, *The Lorax*, the line “I hear things are just as bad up in Lake Erie” was removed more than fourteen years after the story was published, after two research associates from the Ohio Sea Grant Program wrote to Seuss about the clean-up of Lake Erie. Do you think the line should have been removed? How could you use this book in your classroom to discuss the Great Black Swamp and Lake Erie?
 - Story about the Ohio Sea Grant letter to Dr. Seuss <https://bit.ly/3mqhUf5>
 - Watch <https://www.facebook.com/ClevelandMetroparks/videos/10153655693173603> to see where in *The Lorax* that Lake Erie was mentioned
 - Article about climate and Lake Erie <https://bit.ly/3sRllhi>
5. The Lyngbya now being washed up may be an invasive plant or a native strain that has laid dormant. What, if anything, have we learned from the past that could be used to help this new situation?
6. Farmers have changed their farming techniques and the book mentions that this is the major cause of the problems. Is there a reason that farmers needed to change their techniques in the first place?
7. Even when faced with the facts, farmers do not see the runoff as the main problem. How could this be changed?

8. In what ways could the “perfect storm” that affected Toledo’s water system been avoided?

Chapter 8 – Plugging the Drain: The Never-Ending Threat to Siphon Away Great Lakes Water (pages 247-276)

1. Are there any “water wars” where you live?
 - Pennsylvania example: <https://bit.ly/3sSi8y7>
2. How does Benjamin Franklin’s quote, “When the well is dry, we know the worth of water” from 1746, still hold true today?
3. Considering the immense task of drawing boundary lines, how could some of the water problems caused from years ago be solved now (if at all)? What about the placement of the cities?
4. Thinking of the lakes near you, could you have your students debate over whether the water should be used locally or sent to another town, county, or state?
5. Looking at what China is doing to divert the water from the South to the North, can you think of disadvantages other than the cost?
 - Read more about this: <https://bit.ly/3mu9t2A>
6. Much of the discussion in the book about “moving water” centers around solving economic problems, but let’s look at the Aral Sea and the Ogallala Aquifers and the environmental problems.
7. Waukesha’s water problems have not been solved. How could you bring this discussion into the classroom?
 - More about the lawsuit: <https://bit.ly/3uufjnn>

Closing

Pick #BookBento image(s) for this meeting – so far, we have sea lamprey, quagga and zebra mussels, and flying carp.

