



Pacific Southwest Book Club

Where the Water Goes by David Owen

6:30-7:30 PM PT on November 17, 2022

Meeting Schedule

Date	Chapters	Number of Pages
11/17/22	Chapter 11: Central Arizona Project Chapter 12: The Rule of Capture Chapter 13: Boondocking Chapter 14: Imperial Valley	51
12/01/22	Chapter 15: The Salton Sea Chapter 16: Reclamation Chapter 17: The Delta Chapter 18: What Is to Be Done	75

Discussion Questions

Use these questions as a starting point or come up with your own questions. Join us on November 17, no matter where you are in the book. We want to hear your perspective!

Chapter 11: Central Arizona Project

1. Has the relationship between California and Arizona improved since Arizona's governor, Benjamin B. Moeur, declared martial law on California in 1934 and since [Arizona successfully sued California](#) in 1964?
2. When the canal was finally finished, did Arizona have the demand for water that prompted the construction of the project in the first place? What happened, what had changed and how does this serve as a cautionary tale about when/how infrastructure is built?

Chapter 12: The Rule of Capture

1. Why is it so difficult for people to think of overall groundwater use, consumption and estimation of use? How did the GRACE satellite network make observation of the "secret and occult" (pg 149) movement of groundwater much more quantifiable and . . . frightening?!
2. How do you "bank" water? What are some of the different ways in which states or municipalities "bank" water and how have attitudes towards ground water usage changed over the last 30 years?

Chapter 13: Boondocking

1. This stretch of the Colorado River—from Parker to Poston, AZ, to Blythe, CA—has a sobering history: site not only of the reservation of the Colorado River Indian Tribes but also “one of the largest Japanese American internment facilities, the Poston War Relocation Center.” (159) Does Owen give this history adequate coverage in a chapter entitled “Boondocking?”
2. How does boondocking fit in with the state of the river? Do you have a [Boondocking](#) story you’d be willing to share with us?
3. According to Owen, the purpose of the Quantification Settlement Agreement for the Colorado River “is to reduce California’s reliance on the Colorado River to its compact allotment of 4.4 million acre-feet and to ‘transfer’ a significant fraction of that water from farms to Los Angeles and San Diego” (163).

Now that the agreement is in “full effect” (as of 2021), how successful has it been in realizing its stated aims?

Chapter 14: Imperial Valley

1. Are the benefits of growing food in a desert worth the negative environmental impacts? What are some ways to reduce the impact and increase the benefits of this equation? As historic drought persists, what does the future hold for the Imperial Valley, “the largest single use of Colorado River water” (174)?
2. Consider the usefulness and drawbacks of “water footprint” as a concept (182-84). How does it compare with the more-familiar “carbon footprint”?
3. Was there a fact or statistic hook that caught your attention in this chapter or other chapters that you would like to share with us?

Etcetera

1. If you feel inclined, check out our [Book Club Map](#) and add a pin for yourself if you were not at our first meeting.
2. If you haven’t sent a song, article, or movie, or have more to share, send your favorite river title to me at dharrington@marinesanctuary.org and I’ll add it to our growing book club [Wakelet](#). Most recent additions: the [etymology of boondocks](#), a two minute PBS [Come West and Be Cured](#) clip, and Nomadland on the [IMDb](#).