



Southeast Book Club

The World of the Salt Marsh by Charles Seabrook

8:00-9:00 PM ET on Monday, January 30th, 2023

Meeting Schedule

Date	Chapters	Number of Pages
1/30/23	Chapter 1: The Poetry of the Marsh Chapter 2: A Walk Across the Marsh Chapter 3: Tide Watching	57
2/13/23	Chapter 4: Too Big for Its Britches Chapter 5: Farms in the River Chapter 6: Gone with the Flow	57
2/27/23	Chapter 7: A Tale of Two Rivers Chapter 8: An Endangered Culture Chapter 9: The Institute Chapter 10: Protecting the Marsh?	76
3/13/23	Chapter 11: Saving the Oyster Chapter 12: Saving the Marsh Chapter 13: Rice Fields and Causeways Chapter 14: Bridging the Marsh	74
3/27/23	Chapter 15: The Ultimate Price Chapter 16: Living on the Edge Chapter 17: The Last Season Chapter 18: The Beloved Land	58

Discussion Questions

As you read, you will most likely come up with questions of your own. Jot them down and share them with us! Here are the questions our facilitators came up with as they read the first three chapters last week.

Introduction

1. What were your initial impressions or expectations when you first looked at the front and back covers of the book?
2. Did anything in the introduction hook you right away?

Chapter 1: The Poetry of the Marsh

1. Why do you think a book about “appreciating and protecting the tidal marshes” discusses poetry in the first chapter?

2. Seabrook, the author, describes how the Brunswick Sidney Lanier knew is starkly different in many ways today. On page 17, Seabrook writes, “Its [Brunswick’s] polluting industries still make it one of the most contaminated places in the South.” Four of its hazardous waste sites are “so contaminated they were designated to receive federal funds for cleanup under the national Superfund priority program”.

Are there any places in your area (or you have visited) that have experienced a similar type of change?

3. On page 12, Seabrook notes “They see the marsh only from their boat or car or from a bank or a dock. He notes. They never actually walk in the marsh itself.”

Why do you think the author makes a point to discuss how little people know about the place they experience daily?

4. The author draws the reader in by describing the sights, sounds, and smells of the marsh. How did this help you in connecting with the area as you were reading?

Chapter 2: A Walk Across the Marsh

1. Certain groups of people have an immense connection (say bond) with nature. Seabrook writes about sea island Gullah people’s sweetgrass baskets on page 23. In what ways do you personally, your community, or your school use nature to preserve culture or identity?
2. Georgia’s hammocks (ecological islands in the middle of salt marshes) are becoming developed for residential and commercial properties. “The impending threats prompted [Scenic America](#), a Washington-based group that recognizes places of exceptional beauty, to place Georgia’s hammocks on its list of America’s ten most endangered landscapes” (Seabrook, p. 33).

What are your thoughts on this issue? What experience or knowledge do you have of such preservation efforts? How else can a community safeguard natural beauty and habitats? How else can a community safeguard its natural beauty and habitats?

Chapter 3: Tide Watching

1. On page 35, the author discusses the role of mud snails. What is their role in a balanced marsh ecosystem? Why do you think it is important for Seabrook to discuss the roles of different organisms in the marsh ecosystem?
2. How could you connect the roles of organisms in a marsh ecosystem into your classroom or learning environment? Why may this be important to share with your students?
3. Look back at pg. 37 where Seabrook discusses the role of the tides in the salt marsh. What were your initial thoughts about how important the tides are to keeping the marine ecosystem balanced? Feel free to expand on how the tides have also had an impact on historic events.