



Southeast Book Club

The World of the Salt Marsh by Charles Seabrook

8:00-9:00 PM ET on Monday, February 13th, 2023

Meeting Schedule

Date	Chapters	Number of Pages
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 Chapters 4-6 last week.

Chapter 4: Too Big for Its Britches

1. Revisit the story of Mildred and Carl. Think about both of their viewpoints on the changes happening to John's Island. With whom do you resonate? Have you had experiences similar to Mildred and Carl?

2. Seabrook discusses some of the negative effects new development can have on the environment. For example, Charles Newell from South Carolina’s Department of Health and Environmental Control tells the author, “Every time someone puts up a house or a parking lot, that’s just less permeable surface for drainage” (p. 72). Seabrook also writes how “researchers found that chemical runoff from the golf course and surrounding subdivisions has had a deleterious impact on the marshes and waters” (p. 74). And sadly, new development can obliterate the cultural link between people and places, as discussed on page 73 when contractors bulldozed the old bridge from Phillips Community (a tight-knit Gullah enclave) and Parker Island.

Were you surprised when reading about these effects of new construction on and around the salt marshes? Do you foresee any other potential effects on the land and people?

Chapter 5: Farms in the River

1. Why do you think Seabrook spent the better part of this chapter sharing Charlie Phillips’ story as a clam farmer?
2. It is not always private contractors who seize and develop the land. Other “well-perceived” development initiatives, such as schools, hospitals, and fire stations, can change the geographical and cultural landscape of an area. On page 82, Seabrook writes about when the government needed land at Harris Neck during the aftermath of Pearl Harbor to build an airfield to base planes patrolling the shoreline for German U-boats and to train pilots.

What are your thoughts on the consequences of such well-intentioned developments in communities surrounding the salt marsh? What about the communities in your area?

Chapter 6: Gone with the Flow

1. Seabrook discusses the impact of urbanization in estuaries/salt marshes. What are some personal connections you have experienced with similar issues? What are some lasting impacts you see occurring because of these modifications to the salt marshes?
2. Revisit the section on the Role of Fresh Water (pg. 101-103). What stood out to you? Was there any new information or a shift in perspective that you connected with?
3. Reflect on Chapter 6. Why do you think Seabrook dedicated a full chapter to describing the impact of different water systems on salt marshes? Why is it important to understand these systems and their role in the salt marsh?