



# Contested Waters: An Environmental History of the Colorado River

*April R. Summitt*

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"To fully understand this river and its past, one must examine many separate pieces of history scattered throughout two nations--seven states within the United States and two within Mexico--and sort through a large amount of scientific data. One needs to be part hydrologist, geologist, economist, sociologist, anthropologist, and historian to fully understand the entire story. Despite this river's narrow size and meager flow, its tale is very large indeed."

-From the conclusion

The Colorado River is a vital resource to urban and agricultural communities across the Southwest, providing water to 30 million people. *Contested Waters* tells the river's story-a story of conquest, control, division, and depletion.

Beginning in prehistory and continuing into the present day, *Contested Waters* focuses on three important and often overlooked aspects of the river's use: the role of western water law in its over-allocation, the complexity of power relationships surrounding the river, and the concept of sustainable use and how it has been either ignored or applied in recent times. It is organized in two parts, the first addresses the chronological history of the river and long-term issues, while the second examines in more detail four specific topics: metropolitan perceptions, American Indian water rights, US-Mexico relations over the river, and water marketing issues. Creating a complete picture of the evolution of this crucial yet over-utilized resource, this comprehensive summary will fascinate anyone interested in the Colorado River or the environmental history of the Southwest.

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