

State Power and the Origins of Flood Control: Uncovering the Hidden History of Water Management

In *State Power and the Origins of Flood Control*, author Becky M. Beal traces the history of flood control in the United States from its early beginnings in the 19th century to its modern incarnation as a massive federal program. The book argues that the development of flood control was not a simple matter of technological progress, but rather a complex process that was shaped by political, economic, and social forces.



Rivers by Design: State Power and the Origins of U.S. Flood Control by Karen M. O'Neill

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1133 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 304 pages



Beal begins by examining the early history of flood control in the United States. She shows how the nation's first flood control projects were undertaken by local governments and private landowners. These early projects were often small-scale and ineffective, but they laid the foundation for the more ambitious flood control programs that would be developed in the 20th century.

In the early 20th century, the federal government began to take a more active role in flood control. The passage of the Flood Control Act of 1917 authorized the federal government to build and operate flood control projects on the nation's rivers. This act marked a turning point in the history of flood control in the United States, as it shifted the responsibility for flood control from local governments to the federal government.

The federal government's involvement in flood control grew steadily throughout the 20th century. The passage of the Flood Control Act of 1936 authorized the federal government to build a system of dams and levees on the Mississippi River and its tributaries. This system was designed to protect the lower Mississippi Valley from flooding, and it has been credited with saving countless lives and preventing billions of dollars in damage.

However, Beal argues that the development of flood control in the United States has not been without its drawbacks. She shows how the construction of dams and levees has had a devastating impact on the nation's rivers and wetlands. Dams have blocked the flow of water and sediment, which has led to the decline of fish and wildlife populations. Levees have prevented rivers from flooding their natural floodplains, which has increased the risk of flooding in downstream areas.

Beal also argues that the development of flood control has been shaped by political and economic interests. She shows how the construction of dams and levees has often benefited powerful landowners and corporations, while displacing poor and minority communities. She also shows how the federal government has often used flood control as a tool to promote economic development, even when such development has come at the expense of the environment.

State Power and the Origins of Flood Control is a comprehensive and well-researched account of the development of flood control in the United States. The book provides a valuable new perspective on this important topic, and it is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of water management, environmental policy, or American politics.

Reviews

"Becky Beal has written a masterful account of the development of flood control in the United States. State Power and the Origins of Flood Control is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of water management, environmental policy, or American politics." - Donald Worster, author of Rivers of Empire

"Beal's book is a timely and important contribution to our understanding of the history of flood control in the United States. She provides a comprehensive and well-researched account of the development of this important policy, and she does so in a way that is both accessible and engaging." - Nancy K. Turner, author of The Earth's Blanket: Traditional Teachings for Sustainable Living

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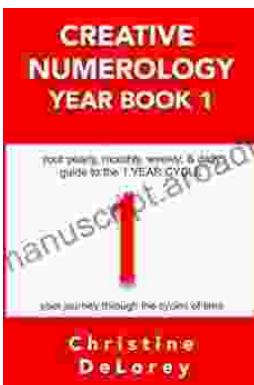


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