

## **Overallocated and Unsettled: Critical Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future of the Colorado River**

Co-Edited by:

Dr. Teresa Montoya, University of Chicago  
Dr. Andrew Curley, University of Arizona  
Dr. Erika Bsumek, University of Texas  
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### **Call for Papers**

In the fall of 1922 representatives of the seven states in the Colorado River basin gathered in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to sign the Colorado River Compact, an agreement to apportion water rights among the basin states. 100 years later, the legacies of the Compact are still palpably felt across the region, linking some of the most contested debates of contemporary life in the US West: water, legal rights, aridity, and irrigation. Commemorations of the centennial of this agreement have focused almost exclusively on the problematic water distribution between the Upper Basin and the Lower Basin States in an era of climate change.

What these conversations often miss, however, is the settler colonial context in which the compact emerged. This edited volume critically historicizes the Compact's commemoration, placing the longer history of the Colorado River and the 1922 Compact within the context of settler colonial dispossession and governance. In doing so we ask, what are the other ways this agreement might have unfolded? Whose rights – and histories of living with the Colorado River – were prioritized and whose were denied? Where might we go from here?

We invite essays that offer diverse perspectives on the past and future of the Colorado River, with a focus on the consequences of the 1922 Colorado River Compact for upper and lower basin states, tribes, peoples, and non-human communities. The editors seek authors who engage decolonial, anticolonial, and Indigenous-centered visions of the Compact's story, building toward a more robust understanding of the river's history – and of its future. Moreover, we are interested in sparking conversations across disciplinary backgrounds and beyond traditional academic approaches; we welcome voices from the sciences as well as from the humanities and social sciences; and from practitioners, stakeholders, policymakers, artists, and community members.

We invite approaches from perspectives that could include, transcend, or converge around:

- Indigenous science & technology studies
- Stakeholder and community-engaged perspectives
- Critical Indigenous and ethnic studies
- Critiques of and/or proposals for river water policy
- Environmental history
- Cultural geography
- Oral history

Possible themes could include:

- The river and its meanings in Indigenous history and cultural practices
- Contested claims to the river and its water
- Settler-made infrastructures and colonization
- Damming and dam removal
- Environmental justice and activism

Please submit 250-350 word abstracts to [overallocatedandunsettled@gmail.com](mailto:overallocatedandunsettled@gmail.com) by December 1, 2023.

#### **About the Co-Editors:**

**Teresa Montoya** is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago whose research and media production focuses on contemporary problems of toxic contamination and tribal jurisdiction in relation to historical legacies of land dispossession and resource extraction across the Indigenous Southwest.

**Andrew Curley** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Geography, Development, and Environment at the University of Arizona. His research focuses on the everyday incorporation of Indigenous nations into colonial economies. Building on ethnographic research, my publications speak to how Indigenous communities understand coal, energy, land, water, infrastructure, and development in an era of energy transition and climate change.

**Erika Bsumek** is a Professor of History at the University of Texas. She is the author of the award-winning book, *Indian-made: Navajo Culture in the Marketplace, 1848-1960* (University Press of Kansas, 2008) and the coeditor of a collection of essays on global environmental history titled *Nation States and the Global Environment: New Approaches to International Environmental History* (Oxford University Press, 2013). Her newest book is *The Foundations of Glen Canyon Dam: Infrastructures of Dispossession on the Colorado Plateau* (University of Texas Press, 2023).

**Traci Brynne Voyles** is a Professor and Head of History at North Carolina State University and the author of two books: *The Settler Sea: California's Salton Sea and the Consequences of Colonialism* (Many Wests book series, University of Nebraska Press, 2021) and *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015).