



River Republic: The Fall and Rise of America's Rivers

Daniel McCool

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Daniel McCool not only chronicles the history of water development agencies in America and the way in which special interests have abused rather than preserved the country's rivers, he also narrates the second, brighter act in this ongoing story: the surging, grassroots movement to bring these rivers back to life and ensure they remain pristine for future generations. The culmination of ten years of research and observation, McCool's book confirms the surprising news that America's rivers are indeed returning to a healthier, free-flowing condition. The politics of river restoration demonstrates how strong grassroots movements can challenge entrenched powers and win. Through passion and dedication, ordinary people are reclaiming the American landscape, forming a "river republic" of concerned citizens from all backgrounds and sectors of society. As McCool shows, the history, culture, and fate of America is tied to its rivers, and their restoration is a microcosm mirroring American beliefs, livelihoods, and an increasing awareness of what two hundred years of environmental degradation can do. McCool profiles the individuals he calls "instigators," who initiated the fight for these waterways and, despite enormous odds, have succeeded in the near-impossible task of challenging and changing the status quo. Part I of the volume recounts the history of America's relationship to its rivers; part II describes how and why Americans "parted" them out, destroying their essence and diminishing their value; and part III shows how society can live in harmony with its waterways while restoring their well-being—and, by extension, the well-being of those who depend on them.

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