



---

Review: [untitled]

Author(s): Shelly Dudley

Reviewed work(s):

Gila: The Life and Death of an American River by Gregory McNamee

Source: *Environmental History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Jan., 2000), pp. 111-112

Published by: Forest History Society and American Society for Environmental History

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3985546>

Accessed: 14/01/2010 16:24

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=fhs>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



*Forest History Society and American Society for Environmental History* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Environmental History*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

**Gila: The Life and Death of an American River.** By Gregory McNamee. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998. 215 pp. Illustrations, bibliographic essay, index. Paper \$14.95.

The University of New Mexico Press chose to reprint Gregory McNamee's environmental history, *Gila: The Life and Death of an American River*, originally published in 1994. A history of this once important river is necessary to understand the current environmental climate in Central Arizona. McNamee brings together both Indian legend and scientific knowledge in describing the Gila River and its surrounding lands. Starting with the prehistoric cultures, including the Cochise culture and the Hohokam, McNamee then introduces the influence of the Gila River on the present residents along its banks, including the Akimel O'odham (Pima Indians) and the Tohono O'odham (Papago).

McNamee introduces the entrada of the Spanish into the Gila River Basin, and several centuries later, the Americans involved in the fur trade. The Spaniards brought new plants and animals to the Southwest, including the horse and sheep, but it was the cow that would assist in the eventual destruction of the Gila River's valuable watershed. To supply the eastern fashion markets, Americans trapped the beaver along the Gila almost to extinction, thus contributing to the erosion of the watershed. In the nineteenth century, Mormon settlers came to the Upper Gila Valley and established agricultural communities. Intensive irrigated farming depleted the flow of the Gila River, causing hardships on the Gila River Pimas and others trying to make a living farming the lands along the middle Gila. The United States government attempted to solve the problem by constructing Coolidge Dam on the Gila in the mid-1920s. This effort to provide water to the Pimas was only partially successful; it did not return the natural flow back to the river. McNamee continues to describe the destruction of the Gila River in the twentieth century with one telling anecdote: in the winter of 1944, German prisoners of war attempted an escape from their prison camp in Papago Park by boating down the Gila River. Any Arizonan would know the Gila did not flow there.

As McNamee continues his narrative of the river to more recent times, several inaccuracies are apparent. From the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Arizona v. California*, McNamee asserts that the flow of the Gila River is part of Arizona's total allotment, but the Gila's water supply is not considered part of Arizona's portion of Colorado River water. While discussing the Winters Doctrine, McNamee declares that the Gila River Adjudication was settled; various parties have resolved their water rights with several Indian tribes, including the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, and most recently the San Carlos Apache Tribe. Negotiations with the major parties and the Gila River Indian Community appear to be reaching a fruitful conclusion, but a full adjudication of the water rights along the Gila River is not finished.

The Gila is no longer the river that it used to be over a century ago. McNamee describes its demise at the hands of mankind and suggests ways to restore the rivers of the Southwest, including the removal of dams one by one. This thought has since been echoed by others who also suggest the elimination of other such structures, including Glen Canyon Dam. While these dams have altered the environmental life of the rivers, other issues need to be considered. This past spring, under a threat of court

action, the federal government authorized the sale of additional Central Arizona Project water to the farmers and Pimas below Coolidge Dam to keep the water levels high in San Carlos Reservoir for recreational fishing. The Gila was not allowed to flow.

Until mankind is willing to change what it wants from a river, the Gila will not be able to return to its natural flow. Reading Gregory McNamee's *Gila*, however, will allow people to understand what is missing.

*Reviewed by Shelly Dudley. Ms. Dudley is a Senior Historical Analyst at the Salt River Project. Her master's thesis examined the Gila River Pimas and their quest for water.*

**Managing Multiple Uses on National Forests, 1905 to 1995: A 90-Year Learning Experience and It Isn't Finished Yet.** By John Fedkiw. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1998. xxi + 284 pp. Illustrations, figures, tables, references.

The appearance of this book is opportune. The author was trained in economics, public administration, and forestry and was a career employee with the Forest Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture, where he had a close-up view of national forest development. The result is a well-documented, intimate, and balanced chronicle of the multiple-use significance of legislation, land uses, policies, and consequences during four periods: 1905–1945, 1945–1970, the 1970s, and 1980–1995. The depth of detail provides a clarification even for those who lived through these events.

Critics of national forest policies and practices might anticipate a whitewash from a former insider. While they will find explanations of controversial issues, they might be surprised in learning that the author does not necessarily justify Forest Service positions. Multiple use is almost unavoidable on lands of multiple resources. On the lands yet to become the national forests mineral claims were essentially unconstrained, and more than half of the area was open range. In 1891 the concern of grazing interests even brought to a halt additional forest reserves. Hunting and fishing were authorized throughout by state laws.

The charge to Gifford Pinchot from the Secretary of Agriculture in 1905 was that all the resources of the forests were for use. The term "multiple use" reportedly first appeared in print in 1920. As a policy it was affirmed legally in the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960, calling for equal consideration of all resources.

Early national forest management was concerned primarily with resource security, as it turned out, a contribution to the later dimensions and intensity of multiple use. National forest area grew from 75 million acres in 1905 to 172 million by 1910. The record burn of 5 million acres in 1910 was reduced by fire control to 600,000 acres per year. Burns were reforested as promptly as funds permitted. By 1908 every national forest had a working plan to limit cutting to a sustainable level, although the timber resources of the national forests were then seen as a reserve to be held while private forests were being harvested. Law enforcement and predator control quadrupled big game populations. The nation's first wilderness was designated in a national forest in 1924, and by 1945, 8.5 percent of the national forests had been administratively withdrawn as wild and wilderness areas.