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Over the past century, humans have molded the Colorado River to serve their own needs, resulting in significant impacts to the river and its ecosystems. Today, many scientists, public officials, and citizens hope to restore some of the lost resources in portions of the river and its surrounding lands. Environmental restoration on the scale of the Colorado River basin is immensely challenging; in addition to an almost overwhelming array of technical difficulties, it is fraught with perplexing questions about the appropriate goals of restoration and the extent to which environmental restoration must be balanced against environmental changes designed to promote and sustain human economic development.

Restoring Colorado River Ecosystems explores the many questions and challenges surrounding the issue of large-scale restoration of the Colorado River basin, and of large-scale restoration in general. Robert W. Adler evaluates the relationships among the laws, policies, and institutions governing use and management of the Colorado River for human benefit and those designed to protect and restore the river and its environment. He examines and critiques the often challenging interactions among law, science, economics, and politics within which restoration efforts must operate. Ultimately, he suggests that a broad concept of "restoration" is needed to navigate those uncertain waters, and to strike an appropriate balance between human and environmental needs.

While the book is primarily about restoration of Colorado River ecosystems, it is also about uncertainty, conflict, competing values, and the nature, pace, and implications of environmental change. It is about our place in the natural environment, and whether there are limits to that presence we ought to respect. And it is about our responsibility to the ecosystems we live in and use.

Biographies

Robert W. Alder is associate dean for academic affairs and the James I. Farr Chair and Professor of Law at the S.J. Quinney College of Law, University of Utah. He studies and writes about

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protection and restoration of aquatic ecosystems.

Table Of Contents
Acknowledgments
Preface

Chapter 1: Introduction: Retaking Old Ground
Chapter 2: The Living Artery: Disruptions to the River's Linear Connections
Chapter 3: Only the Hills Will Know: Changes in the Watershed
Chapter 4: Tree of the People: Tree of Life
Chapter 5: Down the Great Unknown: Environmental Restoration in the Face of Scientific Uncertainty
Chapter 6: Casting of the Lots: Conflicting Methods and Goals in Environmental Restoration
Chapter 7: Ownership of Unownable Things: Property Rights and Environmental Restoration at the Water's Edge
Chapter 8: An Elusive and Indefinable Boundary: Restoration and Political Borders
Chapter 9: The Lovely and the Usable: Toward a More Holistic Approach to Restoration

Coda: Into New Dimensions
Endnotes
Index