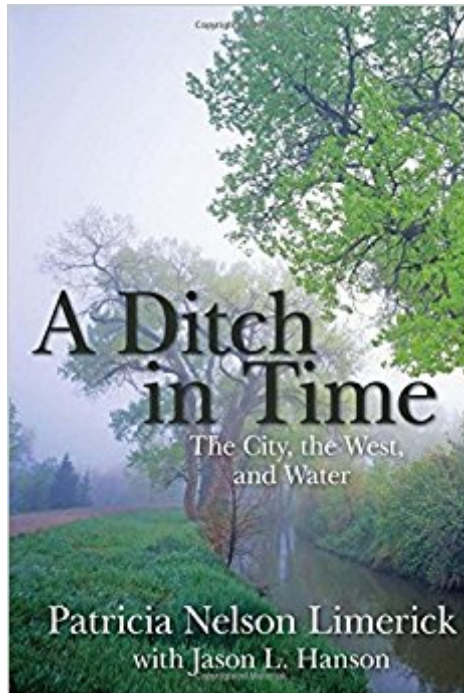


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A Ditch In Time: The City, The West And Water



Synopsis

Tracing the origins and growth of the Denver Water Department, this study of water and its unique role and history in the West, as well as in the nation, raises questions about the complex relationship among cities, suburbs, and rural areas, allowing us to consider this precious resource and its past, present, and future with both optimism and realism.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Winner of the 2014 Barbara Sudler Award given by History Colorado "The first book in 25 years by MacArthur-winning historian Limerick is an entertaining history of the Denver Water Board. (Stealing, even stealing water, is always good copy.) Best of all, this deftly wrought history banishes our complacency about where water originates." [#151;The Daily Beast](#) "Historian Patricia Nelson Limerick has done the impossible. She's made a history of the Denver Water Department interesting." [#151;The Denver Post](#) "Limerick offers a thought-provoking look at the complex and, at times, surprising relationship between the development of western cities and water. The author is known for her ability to speak to both the academy and general audiences. For example, in her celebrated book *The Legacy of Conquest* she shook the academy with a reinterpretation of the history of the American West. She does not disappoint her readers in *A Ditch in Time*. Through the case of the development of Denver, Colorado waterworks, Limerick meticulously details the coevolution of hydrologic technology and urban planning. Those that follow her detailed history, from the early 19th century up to present times, are rewarded with a greater understanding of and

appreciation for what she calls "envirotech" history. This book demonstrates her continued emphasis on "applying historical perspective to contemporary dilemmas and conflicts." Interesting photographs, useful maps, and 20-plus pages of notes support the text. Summing Up: Highly recommended." —CHOICE

Patricia Nelson Limerick is the faculty director and board chair of the Center of the American West at Colorado University, where she is also a professor of history and environmental studies. She has received a MacArthur Fellowship and a number of other awards and honors. She currently serves as the vice president for the Teaching Division of the American Historical Association. Her most widely read book, *The Legacy of Conquest*, is in its twenty-fifth year of publication. Jason L. Hanson is a member of the research faculty at the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where his work focuses on natural resource use and the environment. He lives in Denver.

This is a fair minded history of the development of Colorado's prior appropriation water system and the colorful players and competition over resources as they developed since the earliest mining rushes. Well-researched and presented in a compelling, enjoyable and readable fashion, it also provides a balanced view of the competing claims and issues debated among pro-development, environmentalist and other interested factions. I would highly recommend this to anyone interested in the socio-political history of water law and development in Colorado.

Limerick and Hanson have written a page-turner on a topic one might have thought ho-hum. It is so thoroughly researched and the facts so creatively integrated, that the whole picture of finding water and storing it in our arid west is well understood. The viewpoint is objective and balanced. The illustrations useful and memorable. After reading this, Denver, Colorado and western water users will no longer take their excellent water for granted.

Literate, well researched, timely story of Denver Water. The collateral effects of actions taken by Denver Water are many-fold. The role played by the water department of Colorado's largest city in the development of the state shows today in the relationships between the state's region, And the evolution of the modern ecological movement, the ever-growing demand for water and a resource of finite quantities make for a fascinating book.

an exceptional and insightful analysis of Colorado and Denver politics, focusing on what really matters---water

Misses a few issues on water and the west. Fairly narrow description of water and Denver.

It is impossible to understand the West without understanding water. The author, a leading authority on the history of the West, paints a captivating tale of the colorful characters and power struggles that made it possible for Colorado to grow and prosper. She brings a complex story down to the level to which is is both fun and highly entertaining. A great read!

W well written, detailed account of how visionary leaders prepared scarce water resources for future generations. I had to get past the self-congratulatory emphasis that the author included in parts of the text.

This is not some happy tale and it is not some grim environmental disaster nor a screed about how environmentalists are ruining the economy. It is a calm study of how Denver's water system developed, how those who wanted to continue the growth of Denver and its surrounding suburbs dealt with environmentalists. And visa versa. The book examines the conflict inherent to change, the programs that were successful for both those who wanted to build more dams and the programs that worked for those who wanted to stop particular dams, such as Two Forks. I'm not sure that this book would have much appeal for those who live on the East Coast, but water projects for both San Francisco and LA are briefly mentioned by way of example and precedent. Pat Limerick has a light touch and keeps the subject from being ponderous.

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