



# Water is for Fighting Over: and Other Myths about Water in the West

*John Fleck*

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When we think of water in the West, we think of conflict and crisis. In recent years, newspaper headlines have screamed, “Scarce water and the death of California farms,” “The Dust Bowl returns,” “A ‘megadrought’ will grip U.S. in the coming decades.” Yet similar stories have been appearing for decades and the taps continue to flow. John Fleck argues that the talk of impending doom is not only untrue, but dangerous. When people get scared, they fight for the last drop of water; but when they actually have less, they use less.

Having covered environmental issues in the West for a quarter century, Fleck would be the last writer to discount the serious problems posed by a dwindling Colorado River. But in that time, Fleck has also seen people in the Colorado River Basin come together, conserve, and share the water that is available. Western communities, whether farmers and city-dwellers or US environmentalists and Mexican water managers, have a promising record of cooperation, a record often obscured by the crisis narrative.

In this fresh take on western water, Fleck brings to light the true history of collaboration and examines the bonds currently being forged to solve the Basin’s most dire threats. Rather than perpetuate the myth “Whiskey’s for drinkin’, water’s for fightin’ over,” Fleck urges readers to embrace a new, more optimistic narrative—a future where the Colorado continues to flow.

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