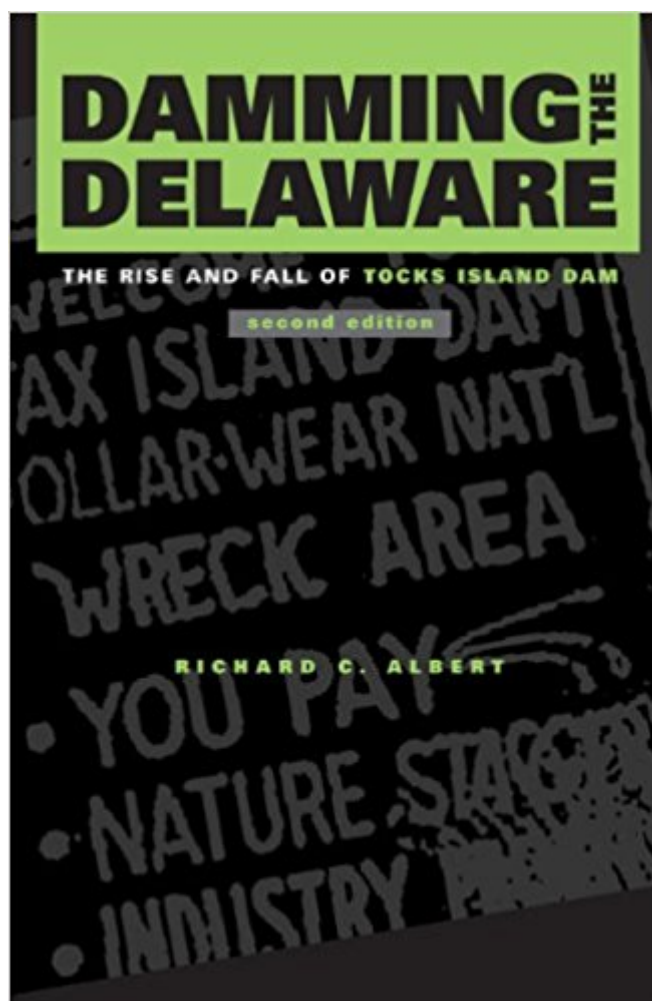


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Damming The Delaware: The Rise And Fall Of Tocks Island Dam



Synopsis

First published in 1987 and named a Choice Outstanding Academic Book the following year, *Damming the Delaware* is the definitive study of two hundred years of water management history along the Delaware River. The history of the Tocks Island Dam Project is traced from an early 1783 antidam treaty, through the highly emotional environmental controversy in the 1970s, to the historic Good Faith agreement of the 1980s. The story involves the water politics of four states, two major U.S. cities, and the federal government, plus the influence of the environmental movement over major public works projects. In this second edition, the author updates the Tocks Island/Delaware River story to 2005. A major shift in the underlying philosophies of Delaware River management during the intervening years is described along with various successes and failures in water management. A Foreword to the second edition is written by Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and Executive Director of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, a nonprofit environmental advocacy organization that has both successfully fought dam projects and removed existing dams.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In contrast to incisive analyses of Western water issues (e.g., Marc P. Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, LJ 8/86), Albert of the Delaware River Basin Commission provides a balanced but uninspiring summary of the public record on water resource planning for the last major undammed river in the United States. Tocks Island Dam has a convoluted history that spans two centuries and involves four

states, two major cities, and many federal agencies. The project, deauthorized by both historical accidents and improved economic and environmental analyses, provides a history lesson in how societies and their governments change. Recommended. James R. Karr, Smithsonian Tropical Research Inst., Balboa, PanamaCopyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Richard C. Albert has served on the staff of the Delaware River Basin Commission since late 1975 and currently heads its Water Quality Planning and Analysis Section. He is past president of the New Jersey Section, American Water Resources Association.

Great book Glad to have it

Nice Book. Money well spent. Thanks

Okay, this book isn't for everyone. The price alone tells you that. But if you are a policy maker or an environmentalist interested in a success story, it could be a great investment. It is the tale of how one river remained damless, despite an authorized Army Corps of Engineers project. I liked the book because I am a canoer who has paddled the Delaware and a river activist who can use lots of tips. The author, Richard Albert, provides an insider's perspective. Most recently, he was a supervising engineer and basin planner for the Delaware River Basin Commission. He's been involved in river studies for three decades. The Delaware is a fairly small river, draining only four-tenths of one percent of the continental U.S. Yet almost ten percent of the nation's population relies on its basin for water, and Delaware Bay is within a day's drive of about 40 percent of the entire U.S. population. Various groups have wanted dams on the Delaware to provide water, electrical power and flood control. As Albert explains, no dams have been built because New York City, New York State, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware could never fully agree on a project. At the top end of the river, New York City wants to protect its drinking water supply, which is based on huge reservoirs near the headwaters of the Delaware in upstate New York. At the bottom end, fishermen and others want to assure clean, regular water flow, something that could be diminished by one or more dams. In between, there are many opinions about the potential impact of one or more dams on the river. Albert provides a long historical perspective, beginning in the colonial era, when navigation was the primary use of the river. States along the river agreed to prohibit dams, and this perspective ruled until the early twentieth century. Water supply, hydrological power, flood control and recreation became important issues in the twentieth century, and Albert gives them

detailed treatment. His description of the 1960s and 1970s includes some bizarre twists to the story. Two examples stand out for me. First, there's eutrophication. That's the overproduction of algae and plants caused by too much phosphorus or nitrogen in water. It stinks, too. Environmental studies suggested that the large number of poultry farms upstream of the proposed Tock's Island Dam would turn the new reservoir into "one gigantic cesspool." I call this segment of the story, "How Chicken Poop Saved the Delaware." Second, the whole land acquisition process went sour. The Corps of Engineers began acquiring land for a huge National Recreation Area above and below the Delaware Water Gap in 1964. By 1970 the project was still on hold, and "hippy" squatters began settling on the new public lands. Local residents were already concerned about the impact of tens of thousands of visitors on their roads, water supply, power supply, etc., and they were none too happy to see Haight-Ashbury move its act into rural New Jersey. In the end, unpaid local activists played an important role in helping to achieve the 1982 "Good Faith Agreement" among the mayor of New York and the governors of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. Everyone agreed to leave the river free-running until after the year 2000 - and then reconsider the dam as a water supply source. A friend and I canoed from Port Jervis, New York to the Delaware Water Gap in August 1999, and we camped right where the dam was proposed. Those who want to enjoy the Delaware as a free-flowing river after 2001 might want to pick up a copy of this book.

As a new resident of northern New Jersey I have heard many tales from long time residents regarding the land acquisition for the Tocks Island Dam. When I first found this book I expected a 'story' about what has occurred over the last 100+ years in this area, and instead I found an extreme example of the government's ability to waste money. This was a very extensive explanation of the Tocks Island Dam project as well as the development of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. It went into great detail regarding the rise and fall of, and the details of this project. This book is not for everyone to read and it requires a lot of concentration to read, however I enjoyed it thoroughly. I wish I had kept notes throughout to total how much money has been spent on a dam that has yet to be and hopefully will not be built. The countryside is beautiful as a National Recreation Area and a project such as the Tocks Island Dam would be devastating to the whole surrounding area. This valley should be kept as a treasure for generations to enjoy.

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