

BIOGRAPHIES OF LAND AND WATER

Join us for a three-part Zoom Talk Series



Stories from the Archive, Stories from the (Irrigated) Field: Natural Resources and the Legacies of Old Spanish Law in the American West

TUESDAY, APRIL 6 | 4:00 PM AZ TIME

Dr. Michael M. Brescia, Curator of Ethnohistory, Arizona State Museum, and affiliated Professor of History and Law, University of Arizona

Since the mid-1800s, two international treaties have obliged the United States to protect the property rights of Mexicans and Native Americans living in a region of North America that once belonged to Mexico. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Gadsden Purchase provide important constitutional guarantees that often have proven difficult to fulfill. Historians called upon to serve as expert witnesses are forced to deal with the differences between history and law as disciplines, not to mention the stress that accompanies the adversarial system of justice in the United States. ASM historian Michael Brescia will explain the difficult historical and legal issues involved in certain disputes over natural resources throughout the American West, while interspersing stories from his archival and field research that highlight the intimate connections between individuals, their communities, and the enduring impact of Spanish colonialism and U.S. expansionism on North America.



The Gila: River of History

TUESDAY, APRIL 20 | 4:00 PM AZ TIME

Gregory McNamee, writer, editor, photographer, publisher, and research fellow at the Southwest Center and lecturer in the Eller School of Management, both at the University of Arizona

Six hundred miles long from its source in the mountains of southwestern New Mexico to its confluence with the Colorado River above Yuma, the Gila has been an important avenue for the movement of birds, animals, plants, and peoples across the desert for millennia. Many cultures have sprung up on its banks, and millions of people depend on the river today—whether they know it or not. Gregory McNamee, author of the prizewinning book *Gila: The Life and Death of an American River*, presents a biography of this vital resource, drawing on Native American stories, pioneer memoirs, the writings of modern naturalists such as Aldo Leopold and Edward Abbey, and many other sources. Think of it as 70 million years of history packed into an entertaining, informative hour.



History of Land and Water in San Xavier

TUESDAY, APRIL 26 | 4:00 PM AZ TIME

Jacelle Ramon-Sauberan (Tohono O'odham), from the San Xavier District of the Tohono O'odham Nation, PhD Candidate in American Indian Studies, University of Arizona, and full-time instructor, Tohono O'odham Studies Program, Tohono O'odham Community College

Throughout time families in San Xavier farmed the land and they used an intricate canal system to irrigate fields designed by their ancestors the Huhukam. The Santa Cruz River was right at their backdoor and was the only place on the Tohono O'odham Nation where irrigation agriculture was possible. Unfortunately, the river water was taken by settler colonial authorities such as the City of Tucson to make water a private rather than public good. The groundwater table declined in the 1960s due to the rapid growth of Tucson and increased pumping by farmers and mines in the surrounding area. Drawing from her dissertation research, Jacelle Ramon-Sauberan will use oral histories and other data to tell the story of how the Tohono O'odham pressured the federal government to file suit against entities who were draining water from the aquifer beneath the San Xavier District. This resulted in the Southern Arizona Water Rights Settlement Act in 1982. This allowed for the farm to be productive for the community again.

FREE. Pre-registration required:

<https://statemuseum.arizona.edu/event/program/biographies-land-water>

Grades K-12 teachers can earn professional development hours for attending. Pre-registration is required. Questions, contact **Lisa Falk**, falk@arizona.edu

www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/events



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