

Middleton Manning, Beth Rose. 2018. *Upstream: Trust Lands and power on the Feather River*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press. ISBN-13: 978-0-8165-3514-9. \$35.00 (paperback); \$35.00 (ebook).

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Although the State Water Project (SWP) has contributed to California's rapid economic and agricultural development by providing drinking water to 25 million residents of central and southern California and irrigation for more than 750,000 acres of farmland, the costs of this project have been disproportionately borne by upstream communities. In her recent book, *Upstream: Trust Lands and power on the Feather River* (2018), Beth Rose Middleton Manning provides an intricately-researched examination of the history of the SWP and its impacts on Mountain Maidu and other native communities living in the upper reaches of the Feather River system, where the SWP's water conveyance system originates. Through her detailed research and compelling writing, Middleton Manning dispels the one-sided narrative that the SWP's dams and reservoirs are "unquestionable public goods" (p.17), highlighting their negative impacts such as the displacement, disenfranchisement, and impoverishment of indigenous communities, as well as the destruction of landscapes critical to Maidu lifeways and identities.

Upstream provides a constructive illustration to young and aspiring scholars interested in the possibilities of truly engaged social science research. Using documentary evidence from a variety of sources, as well as technical tools such as ArcGIS, Middleton Manning provides an in-depth historical overview of the process through which Maidu lands were systematically expropriated for water development, while linking this history to contemporary efforts by Maidu community organizations to participate in decision-making processes from which they have historically been excluded. By focusing on key "points of intervention" (p.4) based on the author's experience of participating in Maidu efforts to claim a seat at the table in the ongoing relicensing proceedings for SWP facilities, Middleton Manning demonstrates the potential for engaged scholarship to contribute to current political struggles undertaken by native communities, in contrast to the largely extractive nature of traditional social science research.

In the book's introduction, Middleton Manning makes a strong case for understanding Maidu experiences with the SWP as situated in a broader, national pattern of water development on native land. "Nearly every place in the United States where there is a man-made reservoir", she writes, "lands and waters were and are being appropriated from Indian people by illegal and quasi-legal means, leaving a painful legacy of displacement and cultural and community disruption" (p.4). Such an expansive geographic scope requires that *Upstream* be read not only as it relates to local and state-level water projects, but as fitting into a larger, systemic pattern of injustice that has played out at the national level. In a similar vein, Middleton Manning's work is also expansive in its temporal scope. Rather than being relegated to a distant historical past, the book's introduction reminds us that native communities' well-being and self-determination continue to be sacrificed in contemporary natural resource management programs. Maidu and other native organizations are actively engaged in an ongoing political struggle for representation and the right to have a say in issues that impact their communities, such as current negotiations for SWP lands to be reappropriated for the purpose of environmental conservation. *Upstream* presents explicit documentation of Maidu people's active engagement in order to exert their land and water rights, from the mid-19th century to the present.

Chapters 1 through 4 provide an in-depth overview of the history of Feather River water development beginning in the 1870s and continuing to the present day. Through each of these chapters, Middleton Manning presents the complex historical background of present political efforts by Maidu by weaving different nuanced perspectives together into a single, compelling narrative. This quality of her work makes *Upstream* essential reading for any stakeholder involved in ongoing decision-making involving SWP lands. Middleton Manning's research can thus serve as a crucial resource for Maidu and other native groups in asserting their right to a seat at the negotiating table in the ongoing relicensing process of SWP land on the upper Feather River. Chapter 1 focuses on the SWP's planning and funding by various public and private entities throughout time, situating the SWP's specific history within a discussion of a history of federal Indian allotment policy. In Chapter 2, the

author provides a more intimate view of this history by focusing on specific instances of engagement and resistance by individual Maidu people during these same years, showing that Maidu have never been passive observers of Federal, state, and local policies of development planning, but have always been determined to preserve their land and water rights, though these actions have been largely written out of the convenient official narratives that most accounts provide (pp. 67-68). Chapter 3 highlights the shifting conceptions of "value" implicit and explicit in the dealings of various agencies, showing how this notion of value was manipulated to result in the cancellation and sale of many Maidu allotments which set the stage for the SWP. This concept of value is applied in Chapter 4 to show how large timber and hydroelectric companies were able to monopolize possession of Maidu allotments in the upper Feather River region in order to acquire land that would form the basis of the SWP's water conveyance system.

Turning from this in-depth history to the present day, Chapter 5 details Maidu efforts to participate in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing proceedings for four reservoirs on the upper Feather River. In partial recognition the locations of nine large Maidu villages, important plant-gathering sites, and significant cultural places that were not inundated by the creation of SWP reservoirs, the Stewardship Council (which was formed in 2003 to manage 140,000 acres (57,000 ha) of SWP land) recommended the transfer of a total of 2,966 acres (1,200 ha) to Maidu tribal and community organizations in 2013 and 2016. However, despite the fact that SWP lands can be donated to "qualified conservation organizations", by the time the book was written, no native organizations had qualified for conservation easements (pp. 168-172). In the ongoing negotiations, Maidu and other native organizations continue to assert their presence through various means, such as by acquiring non-profit status for tribal organizations applying traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) for conservation purposes. This continuation of a long history of active engagement in asserting their land and water rights provides a "ray of hope for [Maidu and] other tribes seeking lands in the Stewardship Council and other processes", as is the case in at least three other FERC relicensing proceedings elsewhere in California (pp. 158, 171).

Despite these modest gains, significant work remains for Maidu to achieve their larger goals through the relicensing process. In the conclusion of *Upstream*, Middleton Manning outlines her own experiences participating in these efforts, which point to key areas for future intervention. Her efforts, which began with her internship with the Maidu Cultural Development Group (MCDG) in the early 2000s, enabled Middleton Manning to learn four key points about the nature of US public works and natural resource management: that the broader public is generally unaware of the histories of native communities which set the stage for large public works projects; that public processes of natural resource management are complicit in a history of denying indigenous land and water rights; that contemporary education and policy surrounding these issues fails to account for this history and thereby perpetuate institutional racism against native communities; and, finally, that future policies and planning processes can be improved in key ways, namely, by paying attention to historical injustices and by making a commitment to justice and inclusion in future natural resource decision-making (p.176). Based on this analysis, Middleton Manning outlines a "praxis of intervention" involving "radical shift in values" guiding policy-making and planning processes, such as by ensuring representation of Maidu and other native communities in these processes, respecting their relationship and commitments to the land, and prioritizing Maidu land claims as the original inhabitants of the upper Feather River (p.178). Middleton Manning's superb work outlines an actionable goal for engaged scholarship with indigenous communities: to put one's academic and technical skills at the disposal of native organizations in an effort to inform the broader public of the humanitarian costs of infrastructure projects, which are all too often seen as unquestionable public goods.

Overall, *Upstream* is a critically important resource in creating this awareness. Through her meticulous historical research, Middleton Manning shows that contemporary infrastructure projects and natural resource management cannot be examined in a vacuum but must instead be contextualized within the long history of settler-colonial acquisition of indigenous land. Her involvement with the MCDG stands as a brilliant example for aspiring engaged scholars hoping to transcend the historically-extractive nature of social science research in indigenous communities. In this way, her book is not only a crucial resource for scholarship related to

infrastructure development on indigenous land in the United States, but an important step toward the wider decolonization of the social sciences.

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