



Phil Schemmeister

CHAPTER TWELVE

Conclusion

With growing pressure on California's water resources, it is essential that an increasing number of individuals and organizations seek to protect and restore our rivers and riparian habitats. Toward that end, this *Water Acquisition Handbook* was produced to provide background on California water law and rights, and offer a framework for the processes that must be undertaken to acquire, transfer, and dedicate a water right to environmental use. It is the hope of the Trust for Public Land that the information provided here will assist you and your organization as you seek to protect and restore the state's water resources.



In an earlier time, when water was regarded as a resource to be exploited for the growth of cities and the cultivation of arid western lands, the Los Angeles Aqueduct was built to help meet human demand. In doing so, the Owens River was diverted, and the culture of the valley was dramatically altered.

At the dedication ceremony celebrating the completion of the aqueduct, William Mulholland, Los Angeles' city water superintendent, raised his voice to exhort Californians to channel the waters of the state into a thirsty, advancing suburbia. Specifically, he said generously, "There it is, take it."¹

As California's population and irrigated acreage grew over the years, it became apparent that what was once regarded as a boundless resource is truly limited. Now, with new interests in habitat restoration and water conservation growing among the public, the tide may be turning in favor of managing our natural resources to the benefit of all, including fish, wildlife, and humans.

To this end, the Trust for Public Land offers an alternative exhortation—
"There it is. Take it back!"

-
1. William Mulholland, remarks at the opening of the Owens Valley/Los Angeles Aqueduct (Nov. 5, 1913).