

# Native Peoples and Water Rights



## NATIVE PEOPLES

### AND WATER RIGHTS

Irrigation, Dams, and the Law in Western Canada

KENICHI MATSUI



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Economic developments in irrigation, agriculture, and hydroelectric power generation in western Canada at the turn of the last century challenged the way Native peoples had traditionally managed the watershed environment. Facing rapidly expanding provincial and federal power as well as private industries, Native peoples saw opportunities to protect their self-governing rights and explore reserve-based economy. Through a combination of field work and archival research, Kenichi Matsui offers an original and pioneering overview of the evolution of water law and agricultural policies in the Canadian west. By incorporating the history of water law philosophies, water development technologies, agricultural policies, and cross-cultural theories, Matsui constructs an interdisciplinary analysis of how both Native peoples and non-native stakeholders struggled for better rights and livelihood through litigation, political campaigns, and direct actions. The dramatic stories of early cultural, legal, and political conflict in interior British Columbia and Alberta featured in Native Peoples and Water Rights enrich our understanding of current Native rights disputes throughout North America.

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