



Culture Clash: Environmental Politics in New Mexico Forest Communities, 1970-2000

Kay Matthews

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The Culture Clash story begins in the 1970s in the village of Placitas, New Mexico at the north end of the Sandia Mountains, where author Kay Matthews built a house and began a family while involved in disputes with the Forest Service over forest management and with real estate developers bent on gentrification. It then moves to El Valle, a land grant village of 20 families at the base of the Pecos Wilderness, where she and her family moved in the early 1990s seeking a more rural life. Here, during the rest of that decade and into the 2000s, the small villages of *el norte* were engaged in battles on numerous fronts: protecting the integrity of traditional acequias; guaranteeing the rights of community-based foresters and ranchers to access public lands; addressing the long standing grievances of the loss of land grants; and maintaining the rural nature of communities through appropriate economic development. As a journalist documenting these struggles, and as a *norteno* living *la lucha*, Matthews weaves together a personal narrative and political analysis of a complex and dynamic rural New Mexico.

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