

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910496136603321
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Titolo	Slide Mountain : or, the folly of owning nature / / Theodore Steinberg
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Berkeley, CA : , : University of California Press, , [1995] ©1995
ISBN	9786612355028 9781282355026 1282355023 9780520918467 0520918460 9780585041124 0585041121
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (225 p.)
Disciplina	333.3/0973
Soggetti	Land tenure Land tenure - United States Land use Land use - United States Real property Real property - United States
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (pages 177-203) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- CONTENTS -- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS -- SLIDE MOUNTAIN -- Fast Fish in America: An Introduction -- 1. Blackbird's Ghost: Real Estate and Other Fantasies -- 2. Identity Crisis in Bayou Country -- 3. Notes from Underground: The Private Life of Water -- 4. Cloudbusting in Fulton County -- 5. Three-D Deeds: The Rise of Air Rights in New York -- Paper Moon: A Conclusion -- Notes -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	The drive to own the natural world in twentieth-century America seems virtually limitless. Signs of this national penchant for possessing nature are everywhere-from suburban picket fences to elaborate schemes to own underground water, clouds, even the ocean floor. Yet, as Theodore Steinberg demonstrates in this compelling, witty look at Americans'

attempts to master the environment, nature continually turns these efforts into folly. In a rich, narrative style recalling the work of John McPhee, Steinberg tours America to explore some of the more unusual dilemmas that have arisen in our struggle to possess nature. Beginning along the Missouri River, Steinberg recounts the battle for three thousand acres of land the river carved from a Nebraska Indian reservation and deposited in Iowa. Then he travels to Louisiana, where an army of lawyers butted heads over whether Six Mile Lake was actually a lake or a stream. He continues to Arizona to investigate who owned the underground, then to Pennsylvania's Blue Ridge Mountains to see who claimed the clouds. He ends in crowded New York City with Donald Trump's struggle for air rights. Americans' obsession with owning nature was immortalized by Mark Twain in the tale of Slide Mountain, where a landslide-prone Nevada peak turned the American dream of real estate into dust. In relating these modern-day "Slide Mountain" stories, Steinberg illuminates what it means to live in a culture of property where everything must have an owner.
