

# Book festival Northern Arizona

***Hole in the Sky: A Memoir*, by William Kittredge  
Reviewed by Dorothy Boulton**

Set in Warner Valley, Oregon, *Hole in the Sky* is the tale of William Kittredge's family, who epitomize the American experience of moving West, accumulating land, and improving it by manipulating water. Bulldozing trees and shrubs, building irrigation channels, plowing up the land and moving in livestock, taking all the actions that destroy the fragile ecosystem. It is a memoir set against the backdrop of a larger story, one that has been repeated over and over throughout the West with Anglo expansion and settlement during the 19th and into 20th centuries.



Here are the personal experiences of one man, recalled and interpreted through a lens tinted with hindsight. Yet the observations of the consequences of altering the land are clear and starkly depicted. *Hole in the Sky* challenges widely held assumptions and judgments about what is good and right in the world. It provokes reflection on the reader's part--how do we assess our history, how does our past define our present, what will the future look like with unsustainable land practices?

In Kittredge's words: "There will never be another setup like the one in which we have thrived. Ruin it and we will have lost ourselves, and that is craziness."

**Northern Arizona Book Festival**

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