

Kelman, I. 2007. "Review of Marshall Frech's *The Water's Edge*". Weather and Society Watch, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 9.

Full Text

Flood disasters continue to cause devastation across the US and around the world. Recent catastrophes, each of which killed over 1,000 people, include Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and a December 2006 typhoon in the Philippines. Does everyone suffer equally? Why are flood disasters increasing? What makes people rebuild flood-destroyed communities? Which flood myths dominate our thinking?

A new DVD by Marshall Frech, a Boulder, Colo.-based flood safety educator, answers these questions. *The Water's Edge* is a critical documentary that describes systematic failures in our behavior, decisions, and values, failures that lead to more and worse floods in the United States — irrespective of changes to the weather and climate. Dramatic flood footage, showing water's immense power and the terrifying dangers to people caught in it, is interspersed with interviews with people who truly understand floods.

Frech doesn't only seek out scientists. He also interviews people who have suffered flooding, losing everything they own and sometimes their loved ones too. Yet some of them rebuild in exactly the same place. Their powerful explanations—"I love this water"—capture some of the fundamentals of increasing flood vulnerability: moving into floodplains, river and coastal engineering, faith in technology such as dams to protect us, and long-term policies which favor the transfer of risk from the wealthy elite to individual homeowners.

The Water's Edge, which is now airing on PBS stations around the United States, shows that flooding is natural, but that we, not nature's foibles, cause flood disasters. We know too much to call floods "natural disasters."

For more information and clips from the DVD, see:
<http://www.thewatersedge.tv>

For general flood safety information and tips, see:
<http://www.floodsafety.com>
<http://tadd.weather.gov>
<http://www.floodsafety.noaa.gov>
<http://www.ucar.edu/communications/factsheets/Flooding.html>

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