As part of this class, the PBS Video Mulholland’s Dream was shown. The following information about the video was gathered from the PBS website:

**Cadillac Desert: Mulholland’s Dream, Episode 1**

Original Airdate on PBS Tuesday, June 24, 1997 at 9p.m. ET; 90 minutes

Mulholland’s Dream, the first episode in the four-part Cadillac Desert series, tells the incredible story of how the hunt for and the exploitation of water brought the city of Los Angeles to life -- and, literally, life to Los Angeles. Evoking the real-life visionaries, scoundrels and dark intrigues behind the fiction of the motion picture Chinatown -- and the remarkable tale of Water Department chief William Mulholland’s quest to quench the city’s ever growing thirst for more and more water -- the broadcast weaves together past and present to illustrate water’s essential role in the history of Los Angeles, as well as the city’s challenges for the future.

William Mulholland emigrated from Ireland in 1878, and worked as a ditch digger for the L.A. water system. He quickly taught himself hydraulic engineering, rose quickly through the ranks, and soon became superintendent. He tried desperately to make the exploding population conserve water, but growth sabotaged everything he did, and soon the city sucked dry the little Los Angeles River, its only source of water. Mulholland knew he would have to find new water, and turned to the remote Owens Valley, 230 miles north of L.A.

Between 1911 and 1923, Mulholland’s agents quietly purchased 95 percent of water rights to the Owens River. Against overwhelming odds, Mulholland constructed a 233-mile aqueduct across the blistering Mojave Desert to deliver Owens River water to downtown L.A. When the Owens Valley dried up, local ranchers seized aqueduct gates and dynamited the pipeline repeatedly. In 1927, Mulholland declared war, securing L.A.’s legal rights to Owens Valley water with a massive show of armed force.

When the huge San Francisquito dam – part of the aqueduct project – burst in 1928, it caused the worst California disaster since the San Francisco earthquake in 1906. Mulholland resigned in disgrace and died a broken man, his real achievement forgotten. But in the 1930s and 40s, L.A.’s City Council, Chamber of Commerce, and its Board of Realtors continued to promote the water search he had set in motion -- this time, 300 miles east to the Colorado River, and, with state help, 600 miles north to the Feather River. But still, it wasn’t enough

After L.A. had drained so much water from the streams feeding Mono Lake -- a jewel in the California desert -- the Lake level fell 40 feet. Environmentalists began to take notice. A handful of biologists fought the powerful Department of Water and Power, and in 1988, the state forced the city to stop its diversions of water from Mono Lake. The victory helped open the gates for the conservation measures, progressive water policies, and fragile peace that have come to Los Angeles in recent years.
The following is an excerpt from amazon.com’s review of the video. Chinatown is a fiction film that was roughly based on the storyline discussed in the documentary.

"Instant city--just add water!" The story of the transformation of Los Angeles from a neglected 19th-century town into America's largest metropolis boils down to William Mullholland's vision of a pipeline stretching across California to quench the parched town's thirst. Mulholland's Dream uses news footage, clips from Chinatown, and interviews with historians and residents of the areas sucked dry to tell how one desert was exchanged for another early in this century. L.A.'s explosive growth demanded ever-increasing inflow, and only very recently has the great city been forced to consider reducing its demand rather than increasing its supply. Comments from descendents of Mulholland and his adversaries enliven the picture, and we realize just how impassioned these men and women were--they were fighting for their lives. The story of the long struggles, both with neighbors and with nature, make for compelling viewing in this first of the series Cadillac Desert.

– Rob Lightner, Amazon.com

Revealing the facts behind the fiction of Chinatown, Mulholland's Dream tells the story of William Mulholland, who secretly purchased water rights to the Owens River, then built an aqueduct to "deliver" it to Los Angeles. Includes interviews with Chinatown screenwriter Robert Towne and William Mulholland's granddaughter.

The class were asked to discuss the video in terms of the four-pronged framework first proposed by Pinchot (See Ortolano in the Readings). One can analyze projects with large environmental impacts by thinking about the project’s advantages and disadvantages in terms of the four categories, using the following matrix:

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<th>Conservation Principle #1: Efficient use of natural resources for people who live now.</th>
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<td>Conservation Principle #2: Waste prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecological View (Science): Integrity of natural systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecocentric View (Religion/Ethics): Rights of nature and non-humans</td>
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In addition, equity concerns could be considered. When all costs and benefits have been accounted for, if the project has net benefits, it should be possible to compensate the losers from the utility derived by the winners. The fight between Owens Valley and Mulholland suggests that benefits were not equitably distributed.

Readings and References

- PBS Website: http://www.pbs.org/kteh/cadillacdesert/episode1.html
- Amazon.com Reviews – search for “Mulholland’s Dream” on http://www.amazon.com/