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TUE SEP 01, 2009 AT 06:17 PM PDT

GreenRoots: Water Barons, Hoarders & Hunters

Patriot Daily News Clearinghouse

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The World Economic Forum (WEF) issued a report warning that the world may face in less than 20 years a huge and pervasive **water bankruptcy** of fresh water shortages. The problem is that water is a finite resource, yet management and policies are based on the erroneous assumption that a renewable resource is inexhaustible. We generally have the same quantity of water that was available for dinosaurs. However, water sustainability is not possible unless we address issues of population growth, increased irrigation for food, energy water needs, waste, mismanagement and pollution of water supplies. Another factor is water barons, hoarders and hunters who work to control and seize our diminishing water supplies for their own financial benefit. If we don't wake up to our water crisis, we could end up just like the bird, looking for water.

In California, water resources are protected by the public trust doctine, which provides that rivers, groundwater basins, and lakes are dedicated to the use of all members of the public and are not capable of private ownership. Even the State cannot claim ownership of water supplies, but rather has the obligation to regulate water resources for the public trust rather than exclusively private purposes. When a person or water agency obtains a permit from the State to divert water for any use, such as irrigation or domestic water supplies, the permittee only obtains a usufructuary interest, or the right to the use of the water. Our laws ensure that after water is used it is then returned to the watershed so that it can be reused.

The water barons, hoarders and hunters prefer formulating water policies based on privatization where water is a mere commodity rather than a human right. The **World Water Council (WWC)** is an international think tank that was established in 1996 and represents **350 member organizations in 70 countries**. On the surface, it sounds like a good organization that is interested in a policy of sustainable water supplies. However, there are indications that sustainability means controlling our diminishing world water supplies for profit.

WWC members are **not elected** but include **representatives** from the U.S. and globally that include financial institutions, such as the World Bank; government agencies (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation); water multinational companies (Suez Environnement); governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses, professional networks and research institutions.

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by Meteor Blades 69 comments 141 Recs

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by Meteor Blades 164 comments 103 Recs

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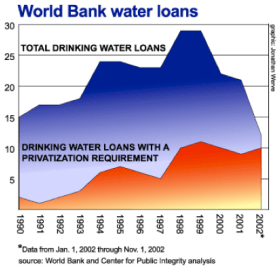
No current results.

One problem is that the WWC views the solution to global water shortages as "concerted action from governments, civil society and business to invest in water efficiency, increasing underground water storage, and **allocating water in a smarter way** among the users." The WWC apparently believes the "smarter way" to allocate water is privatization so that they can line their pockets with the yellow gold from the control over the blue liquid gold. Not just privatization of water services, but also the lakes and streams in some cases.

This unelected body comprised of members from governments and the private sector is **regulating water** by establishing initiatives to implement its vision of a global water policy. Key players are involved at all stages of policy formulation and implementation thanks to corporate nepotism and the **close links** among the WWC, World Bank and private water multinationals involved in the transactions. The members and officials of the World Bank, the WWC and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) include officials from water corporations. For example, IMF **advisers** have conveniently included vice presidents of Suez and Vivendi, global water corporations that **privatize** the delivery of potable water to citizens to replace government services.

Implementation of privatization policy is not a problem when the World Bank, a WWC member, forces privatization on poor countries. In **1/3 of the projects** between 1990 and 2002, the World Bank required countries to privatize as a condition precedent to receipt of funds. In 1990, around 10% of the loans required privatization but this kept increasing until it hit 80% in 2002.



In the U.S., private water suppliers may charge **33% more** for water service than public government service. In 1999, by contrast, Bolivia privatized the water systems in Cochabamba after the World Bank threatened to stop water development loans if water systems were not privatized. The Bolivia privatization was supposed to increase water rates by 35%, but the reality was water bills were **doubled and tripled** such that many could not afford. The result was hundreds of thousands of persons were deprived of potable water service, which meant that 1 out of 10 children would die, many from illnesses related to the lack of clean drinking water. This resulted in a successful water war of citizens taking to the streets to drive out the international water privatizer.

The WWC initiatives and policies can also be implemented, for example, by executing agreements with foreign governments and agencies. Last July, the Chinese government "**agreed** with the World Water Council upon a strong collaboration." If the ultimate project is funded by the World Bank and it harms environment or people, then the World Bank just claims **immunity** from international and national laws.

There are also **water hunters**---like Nestle, Coca Cola and Pepsi --- that grab water from communities. Nestle pumped groundwater so aggressively in the U.S. that the lake levels dropped, stream systems turned into mud flats and wells dried up. Moreover, Nestle does not own the water, but only has the right to the use of the water. Yet, water is shipped out from the watershed which prevents return flows to the basin. Nestle did not pay for the water, but did enjoy the millions of dollars in profits from selling bottled water.

There is also the **lying-in-wait water hoarders**, like T. Boone Pickens, who is applying his successful corporate raider skills to water that he views as a **commodity**. Pickens bought up the land overlying the Ogallala aquifer which does not have any source of replenishment and plans to sell water to cities outside the basin with water shortages at **money-making prices** that could yield $165 million a year in sales to Dallas:

> Pickens says Dallas would have to pay $675 per acre-foot for the water, while El Paso, separated from the Panhandle by a mountain range, would face a $1,400 per acre-foot charge. By contrast, the Southern California deal [with a private company other than Pickens] sets an initial levy of $230 per acre-foot.

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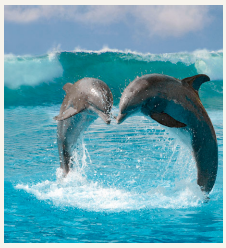
Six oil giants have also "cornered the market" on Western Slope water rights for oil shale, setting the stage for water wars as water for oil shale production will preclude water for agriculture and home development.

The report details more than 200 water rights held by the companies, totaling 7.2 million acre-feet in diversions and 2 million acre-feet in water storage rights in the Colorado and White river basins.

...Many of the conditional and perfected water rights owned by energy companies date back to the 1950s and are senior to rights owned by other users, such as local water districts, ski areas and agricultural stakeholders.

When DC finally gets around to addressing our water crisis, it will be far worse.



GreenRoots is a new environmental series created by Meteor Blades and Patriot Daily for Daily Kos. This is the first time that our environmental community has had a "room of its own" for the discussion, advocacy and political activism of all environmental issues.

Please join a variety of hosts on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings. Each Wednesday is hosted by **FishOutofWater**.

ORIGINALLY POSTED TO PATRIOT DAILY NEWS CLEARINGHOUSE ON TUE SEP 01, 2009 AT 06:17 PM PDT.

DK GreenRoots Environment Teaching Water

COMMENT PREFERENCES EXPAND SHRINK HIDE AUTO REFRESH?

22 COMMENTS | PERMALINK

Tip Jar (**44+ / 0-**)

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed.
Mohandas K. Gandhi

by **Patriot Daily News Clearinghouse** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 06:17:29 PM PDT**

the donald has been in on this for some time (**1+ / 0-**)

now on his site:

> Trump Ice spring water is one of the purest natural spring waters bottled in the world. It
> is tested continually to confirm its purity and bottled at the source in a modern facility to
> ensure that purity is maintained. Try its refreshing taste and you will agree—the
> difference is clear.
>
> Available at specialty food stores and grocery chains nationwide.
>
> For more information, please call 212-836-3248 or click here.

don't bother clicking, but i think ill call tomorrow to find out where his water comes from...
link

"And the dream lives on" Edward M. Kennedy

by **boatsie** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 09:17:28 PM PDT**

[**Parent**]

fabulous diary as usual nt (**2+ / 0-**)

"And the dream lives on" Edward M. Kennedy

by **boatsie** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 09:17:47 PM PDT**

[**Parent**]

thanks boatsie. :) (**1+ / 0-**)

nice to hear after very frustrating all afternoon with google and email and just net stuff not working right.

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed. Mohandas K. Gandhi

by **Patriot Daily News Clearinghouse** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 09:54:35 PM PDT**

[**Parent**]

excellent work (**1+ / 0-**)

Thanks for posting this.

*I am Clem, Clem Guttata... come visit us at Wild, Wonderful **West Virginia Blue**.*

by **wvablue** on **Wed Sep 02, 2009 at 03:54:01 AM PDT**

[**Parent**]

Ahead of Jimena (**12+ / 0-**)

parts of Baja California were so dry that they were rationing water so that you could only get it two days out of the week.

A man could get mighty thirst.

The sleep of reason brings forth monsters. --Goya

by **MadScientist** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 06:23:11 PM PDT**

Don't forget Fiji Water (**13+ / 0-**)

in that list of water hunters. **Mother Jones has an excellent piece** on them in their latest issue.

Here's a bit:

> Nowhere in Fiji Water's glossy marketing materials will you find reference to the typhoid outbreaks that plague Fijians because of the island's faulty water supplies; the corporate entities that Fiji Water

has—despite the owners' talk of financial transparency—set up in tax havens like the Cayman Islands and Luxembourg; or the fact that its signature bottle is made from Chinese plastic in a diesel-fueled plant and hauled thousands of miles to its ecoconscious consumers. And, of course, you won't find mention of the military junta for which Fiji Water is a major source of global recognition and legitimacy. (Gilmour has described the square bottles as "little ambassadors" for the poverty-stricken nation.)

"We are Fiji," declare Fiji Water posters across the island, and the slogan is almost eerily accurate: The reality of Fiji, the country, has been eclipsed by the glistening brand of Fiji, the water.

Another great reason to completely give up bottled water!

*Vote for yourself at **www.ni4d.org**!*

by **rossl** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 06:26:07 PM PDT**

Water flows toward money again. (**7+ / 0-**)

It's a good think that the rich can't hoard air.

I am just beginning to appreciate how serious this crisis could become -- and it will ultimately be a crisis of distribution more than a crisis of resources, I think. The politics of distribution.

Thanks for a great diary, PD.

There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground. --Rumi

by **rb137** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 06:31:31 PM PDT**

yes, aside from things like waiting for recharge (**5+ / 0-**)

of basins, that can take decades and sometimes 100 years, we have the same quantity of water.

However, we have tons more people sticking straws into the water resources than previously and our existing supplies are also decreased by pollution, mismanagement, etc.

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed. Mohandas K. Gandhi

by **Patriot Daily News Clearinghouse** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 06:36:54 PM PDT**

[**Parent**]

I've seen bottled air for sale (**6+ / 0-**)

No joke. It's spearmint flavored in tiny canisters and it supposedly "reenergizes" mountain climbers and skiiers and other people at high altitudes. What a bunch of bullshit!

*Vote for yourself at **www.ni4d.org**!*

by **rossl** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 06:44:23 PM PDT**

[**Parent**]

I'm surprised we haven't had water wars yet. (**3+ / 0-**)

I thought we would have them by now.

You can cut off our oil and we can burn wood, coal, use gas, or walk and put on more clothes. We could last years that way.

Cut off our water and we start to die in a week. By the end of the month we're all dead.

*8ackgr0und n015e sez: **The times they are a-changin'***

by **henry porter** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 06:43:02 PM PDT**

Florida (3+ / 0-)

wait till the Everglades fails !
It's not an if either
It's when !

by **eeff** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 06:43:05 PM PDT**

Hunters ???? (2+ / 0-)

you should specify in your diary ,,,Hunters contribute more money to conservation and wildlife than any other group ,,The hunter in your title prompted me to read your diary . Be more specific in the future ,I hope it wasnt intended

by **seamus mcdooby** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 06:54:12 PM PDT**

they are called water hunters when they hunt down (7+ / 0-)

water resources to take. universal term.

sorry if you were disappointed.

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed. Mohandas K. Gandhi

by **Patriot Daily News Clearinghouse** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 06:59:14 PM PDT**

[**Parent**]

Nestle has made me angry (2+ / 0-)

for a very long time. I remember the days when Nestle would give free formula to the families of newborns in Africa and once the mom's milk dried up the charging for formula would begin. To my knowledge they have stopped this practice due to worldwide pressure, but it says a lot about the morals of this company.

"Politics is not left, right or center ... It's about improving people's lives." -Paul Wellstone

by **maggiejean** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 06:59:03 PM PDT**

yeah, i used to eat their chocolate! (2+ / 0-)

nestle, pepsi and other water bottling companies have been horrible. in India,they made such a mess, dumping waste from bottling plant into environment, and lying about it, ultimately caught by BBC, iirc.

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed. Mohandas K. Gandhi

by **Patriot Daily News Clearinghouse** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 07:01:21 PM PDT**

[**Parent**]

Water shouldn't be a commodity (7+ / 0-)

to be sold on the open market. It should be a shared resource according to need.

Next come the speculators driving up prices, oblivious to the misery inflicted on the poor.

Thanks for the diary.

"The human eye is a wonderful device. With a little effort, it can fail to see even the most glaring injustice." Richard K. Morgan

by **sceptical observer** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 07:00:23 PM PDT**

agree, water should be deemed a human right (5+ / 0-)

some are working for that, but i believe the US did not support this position.

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed. Mohandas K. Gandhi

by **Patriot Daily News Clearinghouse** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 07:02:32 PM PDT**

[**Parent**]

The US does not reliably support the position (**2+ / 0-**)

that life is a human right.

"But I don't want to go among mad people," said Alice. "Oh, you can't help that," said the cat. "We're all mad here." - Lewis Carroll

by **mieprowan** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 08:36:50 PM PDT**

[**Parent**]

asdf (**3+ / 0-**)

Greg Palast has written quite a bit over the past decade on water privatization and the role of the World Bank and IMF in all this. A few:
Bolivia Vanishes: See Style Section
Sell The Lexus, Burn The Olive Tree: Globalization and its Discontents
New British Empire Of The Dammed
Greg Palast On Globalization

I guess Palast is kind of a "love him or hate him" character to our side (all "hate him" to the right). I consider him fun to read, even if I would hesitate to take everything he says as gospel.

"I guess the Americans with Disabilities Act needs to be revisited again to include "Republican" as a form of mental impairment ..." -- Helen Thomas

by **dsteffen** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 07:47:50 PM PDT**

Some days, particularly reading things like this (**2+ / 0-**)

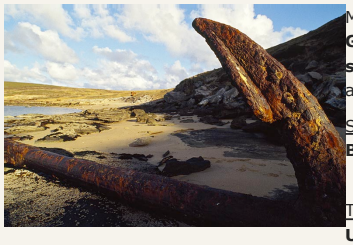
I have to wonder whether we have ourselves as a species on a fast track to self destruction.

> Six oil giants have also "cornered the market" on Western Slope water rights for oil shale, setting the stage for water wars as water for oil shale production will preclude water for agriculture and home development.

These days it seems that to TALK about helping others is Christian. To TRY helping others is Fascism.

by **Unenergy** on **Tue Sep 01, 2009 at 08:30:37 PM PDT**

GR promo Sept 6 week (**1+ / 0-**)



Meteor Blades anchors our **GreenRoots environmental series** this week that is posted at 6 pm pst:

Sunday September 6: **Meteor Blades**

Tuesday September 8: **Username 4242**

Wednesday September 9: **FishOutofWater**

Thursday September 10: **Stranded Wind**

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed. Mohandas K. Gandhi

by **Patriot Daily News Clearinghouse** on **Sat Sep 05, 2009 at 03:06:41 PM PDT**

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