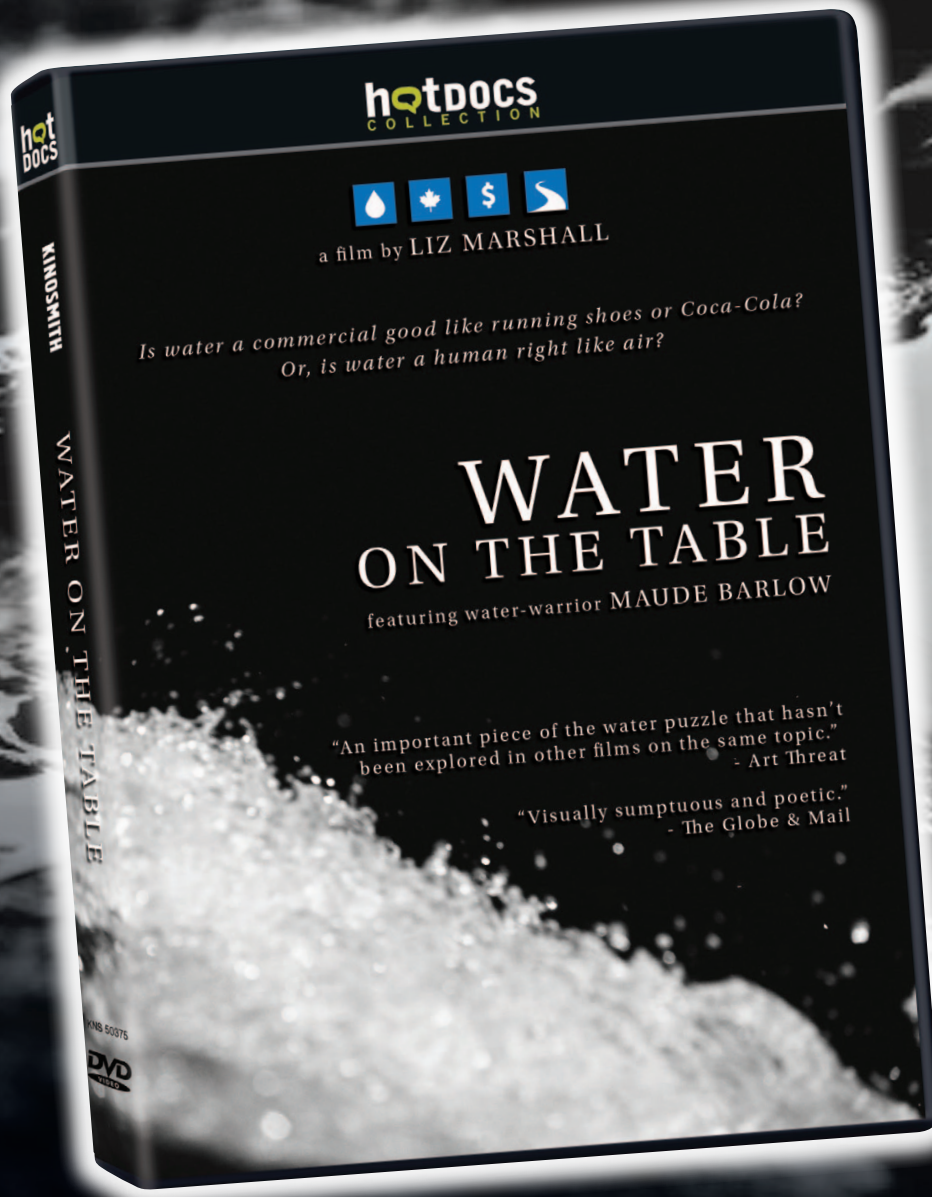




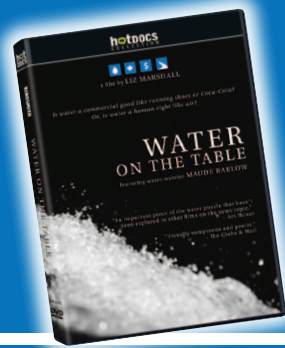
*Is water a commercial good like  
running-shoes or Coca-Cola?  
Or, is water a human right like air?*



# WATER ON THE TABLE

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

A resource for those studying Canada's water, the environment, environmental law, Canada-US relations, trade, natural resource management, First Nations and Aboriginal studies, and policy-making.



*“Rivers have rights to flow to the sea.*

*– Maude Barlow*

*“There’s a mighty struggle taking place in the world between those who see water as a commodity to be put on the open market like running shoes or Coca-Cola and sold to the highest bidder and those on the other who say, no, it’s part of our common heritage. It’s a public trust. It belongs to other species and it belongs to future generations as much as it belongs to this one.”*

*– Maude Barlow*

*“I cannot understand why we are so viscerally opposed to the reasonable exploitation of this resource, which is going to be very much in demand internationally and which we could keep for ourselves in our backyard and say, no, we don’t want to sell this, we don’t want to share this with anybody else in the world. This is going to become a position which will be unacceptable on a political, humanitarian and social level. Eventually, people will just come and help themselves to the water.”*

*– Marcel Boyer, Economist*

*“I mean it is so obvious that human beings use nature. And they’ve been doing it since day one, whenever day one occurred. Whenever humans became capable of thinking and rationally working their way through an understanding of their environment, they have been using nature.”*

*– Terence Corcoran, Editor, Financial Post*

*Water On The Table* Teacher’s Guide is authored by Liz Marshall, Kate Heming, and Lorena Elke. © 2010. Kinoshmith Inc., Water On The Table Inc.  
Photography by: Andréa Cohen, Steve Cosens, James Heaslip, Kate Heming, Liz Marshall, John Price.



*“We need new laws to regulate human behaviour in order to protect the integrity of the earth, and all species on it, from our wanton exploitation. This is my life’s mission in the years I have left.”*

*– Maude Barlow*

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Hello,

This ***Water On The Table Teacher's Guide*** is designed to encourage conscious citizenship, water stewardship and thoughtful learning concerning Canada's most precious natural resource: **WATER**. Geared toward students aged 16 and up, this guide is a resource for those studying Canada's water, the environment, environmental law, Canada-US relations, trade, natural resource management, First Nations and Aboriginal studies, and policy-making.

### ***Water On The Table***

**Canadian crusader Maude Barlow** has had to defend the life-or-death truth against corporate interests for years... And even today, it is a war un-won. At stake in her crusade is humanity's own right to the liquid that sustains all life – balanced against powerful interests that insist water is just another resource to be bought and sold. In some countries where the corporate argument has prevailed, the poor can be barred from collecting rainwater.

***Water On The Table*** is a character-driven, social-issue documentary that explores Canada's relationship to its fresh water, arguably its most precious natural resource. The film asks the question: is water a commercial good like running shoes or Coca-Cola? Or, is water a human right like air?

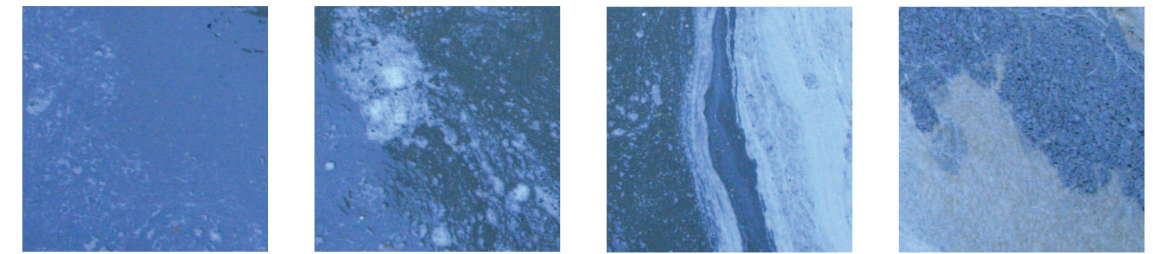
***Water On The Table*** features Maude Barlow, who is considered an “international water-warrior” for her crusade to have water declared a human right. “Water must be declared a public trust and a human right that belongs to the people, the ecosystem and the future, and preserved for all time and practice in law. Clean water must be delivered as a public service, not a profitable commodity.”

More than a portrait of an activist, ***Water On The Table*** is a poetic essay that presents several dramatic and artfully crafted debates. Barlow's opponents, policy and economic experts in Canada and the US, argue that water is no different than any other resource and that the best way to protect fresh water is to privatize it. It is proposed that Canada bulk-export its water to the United States in the face of an imminent water crisis.

WATER ON THE TABLE

*“Canadians are going to have to answer the question, ‘Have we looked after this precious heritage, and if not, what right do we have to it?’”*

*– Maude Barlow*



TEACHER'S GUIDE

*Water seems to be everywhere. We skate and ski on it, we sail over it and we fish in it. We use it to refresh our spirits, transport our goods and lure our tourists. We baptize our children in it, and dump our sewage into it. And, of course, we drink it in order to survive. When there is too little water, we suffer drought. When there is too much, we suffer floods.*

*– Introduction to Canada's Federal Water Policy, 1987*



## INTRODUCING MAUDE BARLOW, WATER-WARRIOR

*“Nellie McClung said... ‘No one likes an alarm clock in action,’ and I think she knew I was going to be in the world one day when she said that.”*

*– Maude Barlow*

### WELCOME TO WATER ON THE TABLE, A DOCUMENTARY BY LIZ MARSHALL.

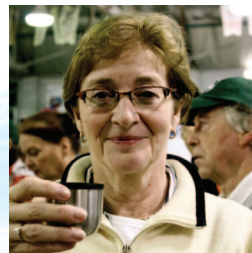
*Several years ago, Liz set out on a journey to chronicle, on film, my fight for water justice. Liz is a passionate artist with a strong commitment to environmental justice. I have been honoured to be the subject of her film and to have her chronicle my life in a very important and interesting year (2008 - 2009). When we looked back over the year in hindsight, it was clear that Liz had captured three distinct stories, one local, one national and one international.*

*The local story is the fight to halt construction of a dumpsite on the pristine Alliston Aquifer up in the rolling farmlands of Simcoe County, Ontario, a story of heroic local resistance by First Nations women and local farmers to save the water of this place. Liz captures what I call “raw democracy in action” and some deeply moving moments in this story. The national story is the ongoing struggle to expose the damage done to the environment and health of local residents of the tar sands of northern Alberta - “Canada’s Mordor.” The visuals in this story are stunning and an interview with a local First Nations elder is one of the most haunting I have ever seen. Liz was with me at the United Nations for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the International Declaration of Human Rights and caught the humour, dignity and courage of Father Miguel d’Escoto Brockman, Nicaraguan freedom fighter, liberation theologian and 63rd President of the UN General Assembly. She shows how the fight for the right to water has moved to the heart of this institution and explains that the way the UN deals with this issue will help define its role in the coming years.*

*I have been shot at by South African police, tear-gassed in Hong Kong and Mexico City, yelled at by World Bank authorities and corporate executives of the big water companies at global meetings, and honoured in the poorest communities on earth in the course of this work. It is to my mind the most intense and important work I have ever done and it has brought me back to my feminist roots as water is profoundly a women’s issue in the global South.*

*I am delighted that educators and students will see this important film across Canada. If we do not reach and teach our young people to be aware of this crucial issue and indeed to become “water warriors” for the earth and all people, we will face a truly diminished future. I sincerely hope that *Water On The Table* inspires you to join our fight for water justice here in Canada and around the world. You can find out more about these and other struggles at our web site, [www.canadians.org](http://www.canadians.org).*

Warmly,  
Maude



*In 2010, each day tar sands production consumes the same amount of water as a city of 2 million people.*



### MAUDE BARLOW BIOGRAPHY

Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians and she chairs the board of Washington-based Food and Water Watch. She is also an executive member of the San Francisco-based International Forum on Globalization and a Councillor with the Hamburg-based World Future Council. Maude is the recipient of eight honorary doctorates as well as many awards, including the 2005 Right Livelihood Award (known as the “Alternative Nobel”), the Citation of Lifetime Achievement at the 2008 Canadian Environment Awards, and the 2009 Earth Day Canada Outstanding Environmental Achievement Award. In 2008/2009, she served as Senior Advisor on Water to the former President of the United Nations General Assembly. She is also the best selling author or co-author of 16 books, including the international best seller *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis* and *The Coming Battle for the Right to Water*.



*Dirty water and lack of a toilet and proper hygiene kill 3.3 million people around the world annually; most of them children under the age of five.*

## INTRODUCING FILMMAKER LIZ MARSHALL

*Through my work as a documentary filmmaker, I have travelled to many developing countries and have repeatedly witnessed the extreme lack of clean and accessible fresh water. I have many unforgettable images in my mind, several from trips to Haiti, sub-Saharan Africa and Bangladesh. I vividly recall watching a little girl squat by a polluted puddle of runoff sewage and oil-streaked water; she lowered her small hands and drank it. No one stopped her. It was a common sight. My crew and I were served expensive boutique water with each meal and we bought cases of it for our long shooting days. Disparaging memories like this are impossible to shake.*

*As a Canadian, I have travelled my country, taking note of the tremendous visual abundance of fresh water. Through my research for **Water On The Table** I have become aware of several important facts, one being that we have far less renewable fresh water than is widely believed. As Canadians we are very fortunate, but we take our privilege for granted. I wonder what our water heritage will mean in the coming years.*

*Every so often an idea sticks and won't go away. It then requires dogged determination to usher it into the world! **Water On The Table** is an example of such a film that needed to be made, no matter what. It began in 2003 when I read *Blue Gold*, Maude Barlow's first book about the global water crisis, I was deeply inspired by her vision and her commitment to "water justice." Fast forward to 2007 when I set forth (tenaciously) to raise funds for an epic film concept that would:*

- a) intimately feature Maude's crusade to have water declared a human right,*
- b) explore Canada's water from both a celebratory and political perspective,*
- c) present strong opposing views from experts in Canada and the US.*

*Not an easy film to pitch or to fund - especially during a time when the film and television industry was experiencing a wave of 'water fatigue'. But I persisted and support started to trickle through; a cascading effect that eventually made it possible to barrel ahead into production right at the time when Maude Barlow was to become the Senior Advisor on Water to the 63rd President of the UN General Assembly! This storyline helps to underscore the premise of the film.*

*So, with the help of a stellar team of filmmakers **Water On The Table** was realized, and was born into the world early in 2010. My hope is that it touches hearts and minds and significantly contributes to the growing movement to have water declared a human right.*

**- Liz Marshall, Director, Producer, Writer**



*If Canada chooses to export its water, it becomes a commodity and should be treated like all other commodities.*

*- Dr. Robert Pastor, Vice President of International Affairs and Professor of International Relations at American University*



## LIZ MARSHALL BIOGRAPHY

Liz Marshall is a Canadian filmmaker who, since 1994, has devoted herself to projects that focus on global justice issues such as: the right to water; HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa; the rights of girls; censorship; war-affected children; corporate globalization; sweatshop labour, and refugees. Marshall's work combines a poetic and character-driven approach with a strong commitment to social issues. She has directed films shot all over the world, in Central, West and sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Central and South America, Europe, and North America. Additionally, Liz has created a body of arts-based films; music videos and music documentaries featuring acclaimed dancers and musicians. She is also a passionate 35mm photographer.

For more about Liz please visit: [www.lizmars.com](http://www.lizmars.com)





*I don't understand why the private sector should not provide a role in providing public services.*

*– Elizabeth Brubaker, Executive Director, Environment Probe*

## WATER FACTS

- Canadians are the second-highest users and wasters of water in their day-to-day lives... While we enjoy one of the highest standards of clean water in the world, pollution also remains an important problem in some of our waters. In some areas, people cannot swim or eat the fish they catch. In other areas of Canada people have suffered severe health problems and even died as a result of not having access to clean water. - Blue Planet Project
- Dirty water and lack of a toilet and proper hygiene kill 3.3 million people around the world annually, most of them children under the age of five.
- The UN predicts that by 2025, the number of people deprived of water will climb to more than 3 billion.
- Canada has 563 lakes whose surface area covers more than 100 square kilometres.
- Home to 90% of Ontario's population and 40% of Canada's economic activity, the Great Lakes are the largest system of fresh, surface water on earth. They contain approximately 18% of the world supply and cover an area of 750,000 square kilometres. The Great Lakes provide drinking water to 8.5 million Canadians.
- Each year, the Great Lakes contribute \$180 billion to Canada-US trade. They sustain a \$100 million commercial fishing industry and a \$350 million recreational fishing industry.
- Almost 60% of the world's fresh water falls within a trans-boundary basin, where at least one of the tributaries crosses a political boundary.
- Forty percent of Canada's boundary with the United States is composed of water.
- Oil output from the tar sands will increase to 3 billion barrels per day by 2015. That is 9 billion barrels of poisoned water produced per day.
- In 2010, each day tar sands production consumes the same amount of water as a city of 2 million people.



## TAR SANDS: QUOTES FROM THE FILM

*“Our Treaties were supposed to protect our ways of life. ‘From the big rock and the flowing rivers, and as long as the sun shines, you will live as you always did.’ That’s what was promised in the Treaties. It is now broken.”*

*– Josephine Mercredi, Elder, Fort Chipewyan, Alberta*

*“For every barrel of oil they’re able to extract from the tar sands, they destroy three to five barrels of water. And they’re destroying three million barrels of water a day now, but they plan to expand it four to five times. They’ve killed a boreal forest the size of Greece. It’s going to become the biggest site of greenhouse gas emissions in the world within ten years. It is an appalling thing.”*

*– Maude Barlow*

## WATER AS A COMMODITY VS. WATER AS A HUMAN RIGHT

*“These for-profit companies are in business for profit and so they come into a relationship like that. They have to make money. They are for-profit companies. So on top of whatever money is being collected to run the water system, they have to make enough money for their shareholders. Some of them are transnational companies and they have to make money for shareholders around the world. So they have to make a profit of between 10 and 20% which means that the rates have to go up. They have to... or they have to lay off a whole bunch of people or they have to cut corners in terms of safety. And I can name you a dozen examples around the world where these for-profit companies have done one, two or all three. And the quality has deteriorated.”*

*– Maude Barlow*

*“The question of whether water is a human right is not a semantic debate. You get people who say it’s a human need, why do you need to designate it a human right? And here’s why: If it’s a human need it can be delivered by the public sector or the private sector on a for-profit basis. If it’s a human right you cannot sell it, you cannot trade it, and you cannot deny it to someone because they do not have money to pay for it.”*

*– Maude Barlow*

*“Bottled water is really the first step towards the concept of the privatization of water and it’s very important for us to make this distinction.”*

*– Maude Barlow*



*In essence, the debate is coming down to who is making the decisions; who controls water, and in certain areas of the commons where there must be a public trust, because it is life and death. We must maintain public control, we must.*

*- Maude Barlow*

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR PRIVATIZING WATER

A commodity is a usable good for which there is marketplace demand. According to the rules of the market, the more valuable a commodity is, the more it costs.

### 1. Encourage water conservation by increasing the cost of water.

Canadians take water for granted and public utility water costs are relatively low. One argument for the privatization of water is based on the idea that if people are not charged for a service, then they do not value that service. Canadians have proven to be one of the world's largest per capita water users. Privatizing public water services and charging Canadians more for the water that comes out of their tap could achieve the goal of encouraging conservation of our dwindling water resources.

### 2. The public sector does not have the means to maintain existing water and wastewater utilities nor to build the new facilities the public require.

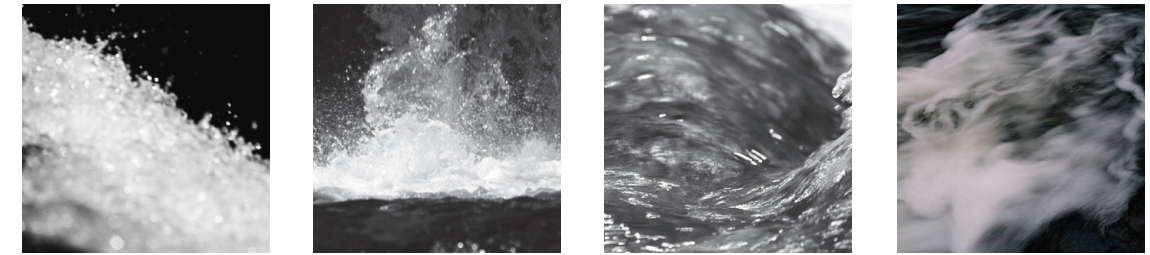
A second argument for the privatization of water is based on our need to renew our existing water and wastewater utility systems and the need for new facilities to be built. The government simply cannot foot the bill, which is estimated to be in the billions. Water supply networks, such as water filtration plants and sewage systems require the consideration of many factors such as location, demand, leakage, pipe sizes, pressure loss, firefighting flows, and more. Investment in these aging systems must be a priority, since failure to manage and maintain high-levels of service can result in fatal outcomes, such as the Walkerton tragedy of 2000. The private sector has the resources to invest in these systems now and maintain them for future generations.

### 3. Privatization increases demand for eco-efficient environmental technologies and promotes economic development through infrastructure renewal and development.

If water were to be privatized, Canadian environmental firms in this sector would be driven to increase competition in international export markets, resulting in increased economic growth and future job creation. Higher prices would stimulate the technology market, encouraging eco-efficient technology and attracting new business to the sector.

### 4. The global pro-market approach for water in developing countries.

As the world's population increases, so too does global demand for water and wastewater infrastructure, especially in the poorest countries. The existing state of water utilities in developing countries is abominable: chemical pollutants, fecal contamination, drought and political unrest have prevented effective public management of these services. The argument states that transnational corporations are the only institutions with sufficient assets to fund the massive structural overhaul required of the current system. Foreign investment by multinationals will lead to direct improvements in local economic environments.



## WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT

*“Water was not included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights since no one could imagine that it would ever be a problem. When decades later it became clear that a deadly combination of poverty, dirty water and water depletion in the global South was killing untold millions of people, many human rights and development groups started demanding that access to water be added to the list of fundamental rights.”*

*- Maude Barlow, Op-Ed for the Globe and Mail*

*“When it had become clear that the growing demand for water was rendering it a potentially valuable commodity in the world, a strong set of adversaries came together to oppose any language of rights at the UN. These forces included the World Bank, which was promoting a program of water privatization in the developing world; the big water utility companies benefiting from this program; and the aid agencies of some big northern countries whose governments had bought into a market model of development. Canada led the opposition to any progress on the right to water at the UN, even weakening the mandate of the Independent Expert appointed by the Human Rights Council to study and report on the situation. Fed up with the delay and obfuscation, a number of countries from the global South led by Bolivia, whose glaciers are melting due to climate change, decided to put a clear up or down vote to the General Assembly and force every country in the world to say where it stands on this most basic of rights. To its shame, Canada was one of the countries, along with the US, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, who led the opposition to the resolution. Some tried to get the sponsoring countries to water the resolution down by removing sanitation or adding the words “access to” water and sanitation, which would have meant that governments only had to provide access to these services not the services themselves to those without means. Others, including Canada, proposed a “consensus” resolution that would have just re-stated the status quo and the need to wait for the report of the Independent Expert. When it was clear they could not get the support for their alternatives, the “big five” simply abstained. This vote marked an historic landmark in the fight for water justice in several ways. Countries representing 5.4 billion people – the vast majority of the population on earth – voted in favour of the human right to water and sanitation. As well, the language of the resolution itself set the gold standard for all future deliberations on the right to water. While a resolution is not binding, it does nevertheless demonstrate the intent of the General Assembly, and when the time comes for a more binding Declaration or Convention, the clear and unequivocal wording of this resolution will serve as the template. Finally it was important because there was a clear split in the powerful countries of the global North. Many “First World” countries broke with the naysayers and voted for the resolution. These include Germany, Spain and France. Moreover, most emerging powerhouse countries, including China, India, Russia and Brazil, voted in favour. This demonstrates a global shift in influence away from these once dominant Anglo powers and their model of development for the world. When Pablo Solon, Bolivian Ambassador to the UN, stood up to introduce the resolution, he referred to a new report on diarrhea showing that every three and a half seconds, a child dies in the global South from dirty water. Then he held up his fingers and counted one, two, three and paused. The great hall of the General Assembly went dead quiet. Then the General Assembly voted.”*

*- Maude Barlow, Op-Ed for the Globe and Mail*



*“I think it should become a very complicated, sophisticated, multidimensional business like any other. There is no particular reason Canadians should want to sit on this pile of water and say ‘You can’t have our water.’ ”*

*– Terence Corcoran, Editor, Financial Post*

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## WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT (cont’d)

Some 884 million people are without access to safe drinking water and more than 2.6 billion lack access to basic sanitation. 1.5 million children under five years old die each year as a result of water- and sanitation-related diseases. In November 2002, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights affirmed that access to adequate amounts of clean water for personal and domestic uses is a fundamental human right of all people: “The human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights.” While it is not legally binding on the 146 states that have ratified the International Covenant, it aims to assist and promote the implementation of the Covenant and does carry the weight and influence of “soft law”.

### THE DEFINITION OF SOFT LAW

Our international community does not have central law-making authority. Therefore, any new law designed with the intent to enforce global change must be created through consensual processes. New laws can be achieved by the signing of a declaration of principles, codes of practice, recommendations, guidelines, resolutions, or treaties – documents that are commonly referred to as “soft law”. Though “soft law” documents do not have legal status and thus cannot be named as legally binding, they do create a burden of responsibility amongst the international community: there is an expectation that their provisions will be respected and upheld. An excellent example of a “soft law” document is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### CANADA

The Canadian government continues to refuse support of the human right to water, together with countries such as the United States and Australia. Federal governments from the Chrétien/Martin Liberals to the Harper Conservatives have refused to protect Canada’s water by designating it a human right. In May 2006, the United Nations’ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights issued a statement that it “regretted” Canada’s continued position of opposition to the right to water and asked the country to “reconsider”. In that same year the European Parliament adopted a resolution acknowledging the right to water, and Great Britain reversed its previous opposition in response to a UN Human Development Report documenting the world water crisis.



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## WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT (cont’d)

### INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS

Throughout the world individual countries have taken steps to take back and secure their water rights and enshrine accessibility as a human right. The people of Uruguay became the first country to lead a plebiscite and referendum for a constitutional amendment, which they gained in 2004. Other countries at the forefront of the water justice movement include South Africa, Ecuador, Ethiopia, and Kenya, along with Belgium, France, Italy and the Netherlands. Nepal, Bolivia, Colombia and Mexico have also been moved by citizen efforts to take action to protect water as a human right.

### FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, THE WORLD VOTES ON THE HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER. ON JULY 28TH 2010 THE UNITED NATIONS VOTED TO RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT TO WATER AND SANITATION.

By a vote of 122 member states in favour, to none against, with 41 abstentions, the General Assembly adopted a resolution calling on states and international organizations to provide financial resources, build capacity and transfer technology, particularly to developing countries, in scaling up efforts to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

### IN FAVOUR:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

### AGAINST:

None.





*“The market works this way. It goes to where people can afford it. Those who can buy it, and who can buy a lot of it, get to do that. They get to buy it. They get to trade it. They get to hoard it. They get to set a price that others can’t afford which means that if you’re not in that category, you die.”*

*– Maude Barlow*

## WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT (cont’d)

### ABSTAIN:

Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, **Canada**, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ethiopia, Greece, Guyana, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Zambia.

### ABSENT:

Albania, Belize, Cameroon, Chad, Fiji, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kiribati, Malawi, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Suriname, Swaziland, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan.

The representative of Canada said his delegation had joined the consensus on the resolution that had created the mandate of the independent expert. The work of that mechanism was expected to further promote study of the issue of access to water and sanitation as a human right and, as such, the text was premature. The non-binding resolution appeared to determine that there was indeed a right without setting out its scope. Since there was no consensus on the matter it was premature to declare such a right in the absence of clear international agreement, he said, adding that he had abstained from the vote.

*Canadians are the second-highest users and wasters of water in their day-to-day lives... While we enjoy one of the highest standards of clean water in the world, pollution also remains an important problem in some of our waters. In some areas, people cannot swim or eat the fish they catch. In other areas of Canada people have suffered severe health problems and even died as a result of not having access to clean water.”*

*– Blue Planet Project*

*“As we think about where things are going, we need to acknowledge that water is owned and being sold.”*

*– Erik R. Peterson*



## #1 PRE AND POST SCREENING REFLECTIVE EXERCISES

The purpose of these exercises is to encourage students to think and reflect about their daily relationship to water and to note any impact the film makes on their understanding.

### PART A: Pre-Screening Self-Reflective Exercise

Take a moment to write down your answers to the following questions.

- What are your earliest memories of water?
- What does water mean to you?
- Do you currently have any concerns about Canada’s fresh water? Explain.

### PART B: Post – Screening: Think-Pair-Share Exercise

Think-Pair-Share is a cooperative learning technique that allows every student to increase the kinds of personal communications that are necessary for them to internally process, organize, and retain ideas (Pimm 1987). As a strategy it allows students to interact with peers through high levels of engagement and participation. In sharing their ideas, students take ownership of their learning and negotiate meanings rather than rely solely on the teacher’s authority (Cobb et al. 1991).

**Think:** Take a moment to reflect on your original answers to the questions asked. Has anything changed for you after watching the film?

**Pair:** Find a partner and share your observations with each other.

**Share:** Debrief with the larger group by sharing your discoveries.

*“We need new laws to regulate human behaviour in order to protect the integrity of the earth, and all species on it, from our wanton exploitation. This is my life’s mission in the years I have left.”*

*– Maude Barlow*

*Home to 90% of Ontario’s population and 40% of Canada’s economic activity, the Great Lakes are the largest system of fresh surface water on earth. They contain approximately 18% of the world supply and cover an area of 750,000 square kilometres. The Great Lakes provide drinking water to 8.5 million Canadians.*



*Well my hope for Canada is that we will recognize what is going to become more and more a fact of economic life which is, that water is going to become a commodity more than it is today.*

*-Terence Corcoran, Editor, Financial Post*

## #2 GROUP ACTIVITY: Conversation Circles

Conversation circles involve the sharing of ideas and thinking together in a safe environment that nurtures innovation, curiosity, and exploration. In the circle of conversation the questions are often more important than the answers. Reflective thinking is the outcome. Curiosity is the instrument.

Divide the group into smaller groups of no more than 4-5 people and discuss the following three questions:

- What would it mean for Canada to declare water a human right?
- What are your thoughts about Canada bulk-exporting water?
- Having watched the film, how do you feel about bottled water vs. tap water?

After each group is finished, have them choose one or more spokespeople to share their discoveries with the larger group. The facilitator or teacher should “scribe” the answers on a whiteboard for all to see so the larger group can reflect on the similarities and differences of their answers.

## #3 GROUP ACTIVITY: CALL TO ACTION

After viewing the film, have people break up into small groups of no more than 4-5 people. Have each group create their own personal “commitment to water” document. This document may include both personal commitments and broader commitments to change in relation to water.

## #4 ACTIVITY: SELF-REFLECTION

You will need a glass pitcher of tap water and glasses for each participant.

The facilitator will be the guide for this exercise by reading various instructions and facts as the exercise proceeds. Note to Facilitator: allow for approximately 1 minute of reflection before reciting facts. The Facilitator may also wish to lead a discussion of the experience at the end of the exercise, or encourage students to write their reflections.

Facilitator begins by pouring a glass of water for each participant.

**Facilitator:** Take a moment to gaze into your glass of water, paying attention to how it looks, how it smells, how it moves.

Take a sip of water and close your eyes, pay attention to how the water feels in your mouth and how it feels to swallow it. Imagine the journey that one sip of water makes through your body.

**Facilitator:** Without water we would not survive. Water keeps us hydrated and nourished. Water refreshes us. The cells in our bodies are full of water. The ability of water to dissolve so many substances allows our cells to use valuable nutrients, minerals, and chemicals in biological processes.



**Facilitator:** Take another sip of water and reflect on the lakes, rivers, estuaries, and wetlands of Canada. Recall one memory of being on or next to a body of water in Canada. How did you feel? Imagine you are there now.

**Facilitator:** Canada has 25% of the world’s wetlands – the largest wetland area in the world. Wetlands cover an area of more than 1.2 million square kilometres; that’s close to 14% of the land area of Canada. Fifty percent of the world’s wetlands have been lost since 1900.

**Facilitator:** Take another sip and reflect on your personal water usage.

It has been reported that Canadians are one of the highest per capita users of water in the world.

**Facilitator:** The following stats are for residential indoor water use in Canada: toilet – 30%; bathing and showering – 35%; laundry – 20%; kitchen and drinking – 10%; cleaning – 5%.

**Facilitator:** Take another sip of water and reflect on the world water crisis.

Of the world’s population of 6 billion, at least 1.5 billion people do not have access to clean drinking water and another 4 billion lack adequate sanitation services.

In Canada, contamination and inadequate water and sanitation services in First Nations communities are a real and present threat to human health and the environment.

**Facilitator:** Take another sip of water, and imagine it is the final sip you will ever take. Reflect on how you take fresh water for granted.

**Facilitator:** Take a final sip. Do you have access to clean and affordable drinking water? If so, what can you do to help others in Canada who don’t?

## #5 ACTIVITY: GET INVOLVED

*“We live in the rich north. The responsibility we have is to do something now to alleviate that so that we are not facing that 2025-year crunch when the only access to water is in the global north or people who can buy it in the global south, and that will be a small minority. So we have an ethical and moral responsibility to start doing something right now, which is to declare water a human right, which is to massively get together and clean up polluted waters.”*

*- Maude Barlow*

1. Organize a cleanup of a local river, lake or stream.
2. Organize a tour of your municipal water filtration plant: find out first-hand where your local water comes from.
3. Write a Letter to the Minister of the Environment.

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## RESOURCES

### ALBERTA'S TAR SANDS

#### CAPP

Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) is the voice of Canada's upstream oil and natural gas industry, representing more than 130 member companies.

<http://canmetenergy-canmetenergie.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/eng/>

Natural Resources Canada's CanmetENERGY is the Canadian leader in clean energy research and technology development. With more than 450 scientists, engineers and technicians and more than 100 years of experience, we are Canada's knowledge centre for scientific expertise on clean energy technologies.

[www.oilsandsdiscovery.com/oil\\_sands\\_story/story.html](http://www.oilsandsdiscovery.com/oil_sands_story/story.html)

The oil sands story is one that describes one of the largest oil deposits in the world and identifies its future possibilities. Through various companies, government and scientific organizations, the oil sands have become a reality as a major supplier of oil for Canada.

#### Oil Sands Truth

Oil Sands Truth exists to disseminate information regarding the environmental, social and economic impacts of tar sands development projects being proposed and currently in progress. Oilsandstruth.org holds the view that nothing short of a full shutdown of all related projects in all corners of North America can realistically tackle climate change and environmental devastation.

[www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca/visitors/attractions/oil\\_sands.asp?subnav=10](http://www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca/visitors/attractions/oil_sands.asp?subnav=10)

Fort McMurray is located on the largest single known oil deposit in the world, the Athabasca Oil Sands. See firsthand how building on more than a century of research and experience separating the oil from the sand and clay, advancements in technology have made the Athabasca Oil Sands one of Canada's most powerful economic engines.

**Alberta Government - Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Planning - [http://mcfngir.org/About\\_Us.html](http://mcfngir.org/About_Us.html)**

The GIR, as directed by the Mikisew Cree Leadership, acts as a liaison between resource developers and operators, government agencies, and the community, where appropriate. It serves as the vehicle to bring forward the values and concerns of the Mikisew Cree as an equal and unique participant in regional development.

### SITE 41

[www.county.simcoe.on.ca/index.htm](http://www.county.simcoe.on.ca/index.htm)

On September 22, 2009, Simcoe County Council passed a motion directing that the construction and all future development of the North Simcoe Landfill Site 41 be discontinued.

[www.dannybeaton.ca/StopDumpSite41/index.asp](http://www.dannybeaton.ca/StopDumpSite41/index.asp)

Danny Beaton – Earth Healer & Protector • Stop Dump Site 41

Danny Beaton is a Mohawk photographer, musician, filmmaker, teacher and activist. Danny has been active in the community response to Site 41.

[www.stopdumpsite41.ca/](http://www.stopdumpsite41.ca/)

Volunteer-run website detailing the developments in the battle to stop Site 41 development.

### BOTTLED WATER

[www.cbwa.ca/](http://www.cbwa.ca/)

The Canadian Bottled Water Association (CBWA) was founded in 1992 to represent the Canadian bottled water industry and to ensure a high standard of quality for bottled water.

#### Inside the Bottle

Inside the Bottle is a Polaris Institute campaign designed to stimulate awareness and action about the bottled water industry. The campaign highlights the environmental, health, social and economic impacts of bottled water and calls for the rebuilding and maintenance of public tap water systems.

### OTHER

#### Assembly of First Nations

"Water problems and challenges are connected and should be addressed in a holistic manner." There are more than 630 First Nation's communities in Canada. The AFN Secretariat is designed to present the views of the various First Nations through their leaders in areas such as: Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, Economic Development, Education, Languages and Literacy, Health, Housing, Social Development, Justice, Taxation, Land Claims, and the Environment.

#### CUPE

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) is Canada's largest union. With more than half a million members across Canada, workers, united through CUPE, have the clout and expertise to deal with the growing complexities of our global economy.

#### Earth Day Network

Earth Day Network (EDN) promotes environmental citizenship and year-round progressive action worldwide. Earth Day is the only event celebrated simultaneously around the globe by people of all backgrounds, faiths and nationalities. More than a half billion people participate in our campaigns every year.

#### Environment Canada's Water Policy

Did you know that Canada is one of the highest water users per capita in the world? It's no wonder that easy access to safe, clean water is considered to be an important issue.

[www.foodandwaterwatch.org](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org)

Food & Water Watch is a non-profit organization working with grassroots organizations around the world to create an economically and environmentally viable future.

#### Program On Water Issues

The Program On Water Issues (POWI) creates opportunities for members of the private, public, academic, and not-for-profit sectors to join in collaborative research, dialogue, and education. The Program is dedicated to giving voice to those who would bring transparency and breadth of knowledge to the understanding and protection of Canada's valuable water resources.

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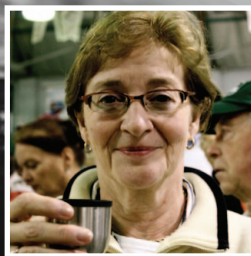
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*“Rivers have rights to flow to the sea.” – Maude Barlow*



Canadian crusader Maude Barlow has had to defend the life-or-death truth against corporate interests for years... And even today, it is a war un-won. At stake in her crusade is humanity's own right to the liquid that sustains all life – balanced against powerful interests that insist water is just another resource to be bought and sold.

*Water On The Table* is a character-driven, social-issue documentary by Liz Marshall that explores Canada's relationship to its fresh water, arguably its most precious natural resource. The film asks the question: is water a commercial good like running-shoes or Coca-Cola? Or, is water a human right like air?

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