Human interconnectedness is nearly as complex as the ecosystem through which the river flows on its journey to the sea.

Rev. William Skystad, America Mag.
Crosscutting Issue

Water is the primary medium through which climate change will affect livelihoods, shape economics and alter the natural environment. How water is managed largely determines the effectiveness of adaptation to climate change.

Michael van der Valk, CPWC
Perhaps there is no greater right than the right of a drop of water to come back to the watersheds and the water systems that nourish all life and maintain the integrity of the Commons.
Retrievec an ancient concept

THE COMMONS

Being members of the human family, assumes that what belongs to one belongs to all

owc, p. 2
The answer to the world’s water crisis rests on twin foundations:

- Conservation
- AND
- Water justice

NO global corporation, that must be competitive to survive, can operate on these two principles.
Losing the Commons

- Enclosure or the removal of the peasant’s right to farm, graze and hunt on land owned by nobility started in 1740 with the Industrial Revolution and the need for a steady supply of raw materials for industry.

- The second “enclosure of the Commons” happened when the economic globalization and market fundamentalism became the model of the development for the world. Transnational corporations gained access to mineral, timber and water resources in even the most remote parts of the earth for the first time.

owc, p. 3
When capitalism started, nature was abundant and capital was scarce, so protections for capital were created. However, we (in the global North at least) are “awash in capital and literally running out of nature”.

Growth has cannibalized the Commons, taking goods from the Commons and selling them back to us as commodities.
The right to use but not abuse from English Common Law was not followed by the ranchers, farmers and miners of the American West.

They chose instead the doctrine of ‘prior appropriation’: “He who is first in time is first in right.” This established absolute right to property, including the right to sell and trade water.

This system provided essential ingredients for an efficient market wherein property rights were well-defined, enforced and transferable.

ww, p. 22 & 24
And Today – Invading Tensions

The global economic order asserts:
Water is a private good to be extracted
No limits should be placed on the use of water
Water markets can be freely traded

OR

The global commons asserts:
Water is a public trust, shared by all
Community management regulates the use of water

owc, p. 3
The Divide

Private values of exclusion, possession, monopoly and personal corporate gain.

Values of inclusion, collective ownership and community assets.
The Essence of Water

“Water is fundamental for life and health. The human right to water is indispensable for leading a healthy life in human dignity. It is a pre-requisite to the realization of all other human rights.”

UN Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights, Nov. 2002

EBCEDM p. 19
Google Images
Skystad, Rev. Wm., America Magazine, 4/20/09
Van der Valk, Michael, Coordinator, Communication and Information on Co–operative Program on Water and Climate, Netherlands