

You never miss the water till the well runs dry

--Rowland Howard--

Large Scale Water Extraction, the Global Water Crisis and Maine

The World's Aquifers

- 💧 The High Plains Ogallala that stretches from South Dakota to Texas is being depleted eight times faster than nature can replenish it.
- 💧 California's San Joaquin Valley has dropped nearly 30 feet in some spots within the last 50 years.
- 💧 In Mexico City water is removed at rates that exceed the surrounding aquifers natural ability to replace water between 50-80 percent.
- 💧 Beijing's water table has dropped over 200 feet in the last forty years, causing the Chinese government to consider moving the capital.

Water Shortage

- 💧 The Environmental Protection Agency warns that if current water use continues unchecked, 36 states will suffer water shortages in the next 5 years.
- 💧 In 2007, Lake Superior (the largest fresh water lake in the world) dropped to its lowest level in 80 years.
- 💧 Pressure from private companies is mounting on water-rich states like Maine and the Great Lakes States for access to their groundwater supplies.

Climate Change impacts on groundwater supply

- 💧 Fresh water is renewable only by rainfall (in Maine, aquifers are renewed in April and November).
- 💧 The Union of Concerned Scientists predicts that climate change "in this [Maine] historically water-rich state, [will bring] rising summer temperatures coupled with little change in summer rainfall are projected to increase the frequency of short-term (1-3 month) droughts and decrease summer stream flow.
- 💧 A University of Cape Town study found that climate change can reduce the amount of groundwater available by 30 percent in their region. The study developed the concept of climate impact factor to help other areas determine how climate change will affect their groundwater supplies.

Environmental Impacts from Water Extraction

- 💧 Groundwater mining permanently reduces the earth's capacity to store water. In California, for example, overuse of the underground water supplies in the Central Valley has resulted in a loss of over 40 percent of the combined storage capacity of all human-made surface reservoirs in the state.
- 💧 Destroying water's natural habitat not only creates a supply crisis for people and animals, it also dramatically diminishes the amount of available fresh water on the planet.

💧 Trout Unlimited reports that New England has experienced a spider web pattern of regional population growth and development away from the places that the region's water supply system originally was designed to serve. This has led to the application of "quick-fix" solutions that cause groundwater depletion and the de-watering of small streams.

Bottle Water Mining

- 💧 Commercial bottle water extraction is done almost exclusively by private, multi-national corporate firms whose ultimate interest is profit for their stakeholders.
- 💧 Bottle water extraction is connected to already stressed water systems like the Great Lakes or in RURAL communities where the sudden drop in water affects fewer people but devastates the watershed and livelihoods of those who live there (Blue Covenant):
 - 💧 Water from the Ward's Brook in Fryeburg, Maine is supposed to drain into Lovewell's Pond. Without the excess water, Lovewell's Pond has experienced drastic change in water quality and marine growth since Nestle began extracting almost 500 million gallons of water a year.
 - 💧 In São Lourenço, Brazil, Nestlé sank two massive wells to extract water for supplying its *Pure Life* brand across Brazil. The volumes drawn off have affected the other springs, one of which completely dried up. Others changed their mineral composition. The ground started to subside and the chapel like buildings over the springs began to crack. After the wells ran dry, the Brazilian Government ordered Nestlé to close its *Pure Life* bottling plant for its unsustainable practices.

Democratic Solutions to the Water Crisis and Unsustainable Extraction of Groundwater Resources

- 💧 British Columbia recognizes its water as being owned by the people of the Canadian Province. The Province has banned bulk exports of water.
- 💧 Vermont's Senate has passed legislation recognizing water as a public trust and public resource. The House has yet to vote on the bill.
- 💧 In November 2007, Fryeburg, Maine passed a moratorium on the bulk transport and processing of water in town.
- 💧 Barnstead, NH has passed a town ordinance recognizing the unalienable civil rights of nature and prohibits the commercial extraction of water.