

September 2022

CSJ Blue Community Updates and Invites



Here is our early Fall summary of news and invitations to protect water as a human right, shared commons, and sacred gift. If you have any news to share or are interested in specific themes or issues, please contact the Program Manager: Paul Baines.

Consider forwarding this email to a friend or printing it off for those preferring paper copies of this newsletter.

NEW BLOG POST

Our Recycling Habit Is In Need of Repair

Two billion. There are over 2 billion people globally who lack access to clean water and sanitation. There are also 2 billion plastic water bottles used by Canadians every year. Our world is marked by both crisis for some and convenience for others.

Our Federal government announced a few months ago that 6 types of plastics will eventually be banned. Read this post to learn more about this ban and the ongoing routine of Canadian recycling companies shipping plastics to poorer countries where our wastes pollute people, the air, and the water. Here you can also read about and download our new resource to help businesses stop selling bottled water. More on that next. [See and share the full blog post on this timely issue.](#)

TWO NEW CSJ BLUE COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Alternatives to Profiting from Bottled Water

This summer, Paul Baines met with the owners of an independent cinema to explore how they could stop selling bottled water, honour the lands and waters, and not lose money. Recouping lost revenue is key for businesses after surviving a few lean years of running a space with safe public health COVID rules for social gatherings.

The strategy can actually be applied and adapted to any social gathering space that sells bottled water – theatres, arenas, community centres, cafés, and more. As more public and event spaces are developing and posting their Land Acknowledgement, our strategy outlines a way to connect this acknowledgement with action – such as honouring the lands and waters by not selling bottled water. There are several ways to recover the lost revenue, but you will have to read our new resource to find out how. [See all our Blue Community resources here.](#)

2022 Municipal Election & Engagement Guide

Combined with education and service, our mandate encourages advocacy for water justice, protection, and kinship. The Guelph-based group Water Watchers has been organizing across the province for several years and one of this year's priorities is supporting more informed participation in municipal water governance. Local governments play a key role in managing water infrastructure, land use priorities, and stakeholder engagement.

Just in time for the October 24th election, this guide:

- outlines key municipal roles that impact water
- talking points on why we should protect water as a human right, shared commons, and sacred gift
- Prepared questions for the voter and the candidates
- Examples of inspired projects and teachings that could be spread across the Province

[Visit our website](#) to read and share this guide or contact Paul Baines to receive it by mail or email.

Consider finding an All Candidate Meeting in the weeks to come and don't forget to bring your new CSJ Blue Community election guide. For example, [Urban League London](#) has several dates coming up.

EVENTS

September 30th, Truth and Reconciliation Day

A day to participate in your own journey of decolonization and healing. Many events are planned across the country and many engagement resources are being shared. Water Watchers has gathered a collection of strategies and resources with an emphasis on water.

[See their collection here.](#)

The Yellowhead Institute is hosting an online event on Thursday, September 29th. Hear and learn from Indigenous leaders as they reflect on the Calls to Action and the meaning of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. [RSVP here.](#)

October 1, The Waves of Change

Maude Barlow is an author and activist, a founding member of the Council of Canadians, and the founder of the Blue Planet Project. Earlier this year, she published her new book: Still Hopeful: Lessons From a Lifetime of Activism. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto and their Ministry for Social Justice, Peace, and Creation Care are honoured to welcome Maude to share her insights for wise hope and realistic action at this in-person event in Toronto. The CSJ Blue Community program will have an informational table and Paul Baines will do a brief introduction of this work after Maude's presentation.

November 19, Watershed 2022

Get your tickets for a one day digital convention where environmental practitioners, grassroots groups, and intersectional movements gather for Water Justice. The program of speakers and issues is coming soon. [RSVP here.](#)

NEWS

People Dying of Water-Borne Diseases in Flood-Hit Pakistan

After horrific flooding in Pakistan that submerged the homes of 220 million people, 500,000 of them are still displaced and living in makeshift camps. With 1,500 people already dead, there is a second wave of death caused by water-borne diseases.

Officials in Sindh (a southeastern Province), home to 48 million people, said more than 137,000 cases of diarrhoea, over 10,000 cases of dysentery and at least 4,000 confirmed cases of malaria were reported in the province this month, adding that they have set up 450 medical camps to tackle the health crisis. [Read the full article here.](#)

WaterAid Canada is just one of many groups raising money to help. [Make an urgent one-time gift on their website.](#)

How Letting Water Be Water Can Lead to Better Climate Resilience

People usually respond to these disasters by calling for higher levees, bigger drains and longer aqueducts. But such interventions are increasingly failing. As we grapple with climate extremes, a hard truth is emerging: Our development choices — urban sprawl, industrial agriculture and even the concrete infrastructure designed to control water — are actually exacerbating our problems and raising the stakes for failure. Because sooner or later, water always wins.

The dominant culture views water as either a commodity or a threat, which is why we seek to control it. But the way we relate to water is not inevitable. [Read the full article.](#)

Statement on Doctrine of Discovery Imminent

A date for a new papal statement on the Doctrine of Discovery, promised by Pope Francis on his way home from Canada to Rome, has not been announced. But whenever it happens it will address core concerns of Indigenous people in Canada and in many other parts of the world. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops is working with Vatican officials in Rome on the wording for a new statement rejecting an entire tradition of legal reasoning, said CCCB spokesperson Jonathan Lesarge.

Next up for the Government of Canada is developing a “Covenant of Reconciliation” that will specifically reject the Doctrine of Discovery and respond to Call to Action #46 of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s final report to work “collaboratively to advance reconciliation in Canadian society.” [Read the full article.](#)

WATCH

A new CBC Gem three-part documentary series called Why Plastic is now available about the causes, consequences and possible solutions to plastic pollution. [Each part is almost an hour long.](#)

[Netflix](#) investigates the evolution of bottled water around the world as part of its History 101 show. Search Netflix for History 101 and find it as Episode 5 of Season 2.

SEASON OF CREATION & KINSHIP

The CSJ Federation Ecology Committee created a reflection for this year's Season of Creation – the annual celebration of prayer and action for the environment from September 1 (World Day of Prayer) to October 4 (the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi). Prepared by Sisters Janet Speth and Nancy Wales. This year's theme was: [Listening to the Voice of Creation](#).

Earth Examen

An examen is a way of beholding an object or being in prayerful wonder. Through questions, you are invited to reflect on God's presence and the goodness of that which you behold. During this Season of Creation, consider contemplating a part of your local ecology. Familiarize yourself with the theme. Prepare by taking time to consider how you can best open your senses to listen to the voices that praise God, and draw our hearts to God's presence in that place of contemplation. This is an exercise that you can choose to do alone, or with a group.

- *Pick a natural place to contemplate. A forest. A river. A city street with a natural area. An urban park. A farmer's field. A hilltop. A garden.*
- *Find a comfortable place to rest in or near this place.*
- *Enter into prayer in whatever way is natural to you. Invite Holy Wisdom to open the eyes of your heart.*

We Humans Need to Open Our Minds to the Personhood of Nonhuman Animals

Rather than pretend that the world around us — and the biome within us — is just some kind of inert, static backdrop to human living, perhaps we might open our minds to recognize that nonhuman creatures also are fully living in this world, what Francis calls "our common home." Likewise, we would do well to acknowledge our interdependence with and inextricable connectedness to the rest of creation. We are creatures too, even if we would like to pretend otherwise.

Such a shift in the human view of nonhuman animals may not solve all our ecological and spiritual crises overnight, but it can help renew the way we see, think, live and pray in the world. And that is just one way to embrace the "ecological conversion" the Holy Father continually calls us to pursue. [Read the full article](#).

Side note, this article mentions a 5-part book series on Kinship which Blue Community lead Paul Baines has read and will be writing a blog post on this fall.

Some Reflective Questions:

1. How did you mark this year's Season of Creation and what wisdom did you hear?
2. In a remarkable [TED Talk by Dr. Kelsey Leonard](#), she reframes the question "what is water?" to "who is water?". When reflecting on kinship and non-human persons, what waters are important to you and how would you describe "who" they are and what they need?
3. How does our Municipal Election & Engagement Guide help you pick the right candidate and over the longer term, how can it help you become a better water guardian when centering water as human right, shared commons, and sacred gift?
4. Is there a social gathering place near you that sells bottled water? Would they be interested in reading our strategy for honouring the lands and waters while stopping the sale of water?
5. How can you (or did you) mark the September 30th Truth and Reconciliation Day and how can this awareness feed more of your thoughts, feelings, and actions?

We have a [Facebook page](#) for this work too. Every week there are new posts for you to see and share. To contact Paul Baines email: info@BlueCommunityCSJ.org

All these news updates and more can be found on our CSJ Blue Community website: BlueCommunityCSJ.org



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