

CSJ Blue Community Updates and Invites



Here is our February 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.

The Spiritual Ecology of Water – March 2, at 5pm (hosted by the Jesuit Social Forum)

Like all life on Earth, we depend upon water; indeed, 60-70% of our body weight is water. We are, in many ways, living water—water that thinks, walks, and breathes. Not only is water essential for our physical health, it also nourishes our spirits. Water refreshes, revives, inspires, and heals us.

Yet, water is under threat due to mining, deforestation, industry, and agriculture. Moreover, billions of people (including some in Indigenous communities in Canada) still lack access to safe, clean water.

Living Water is an opportunity to reflect upon these realities. Out of a deepened awareness of our intimate relationship with water, can we find the inspiration, creativity, and energy we need to work together to defend and protect water—even restoring watersheds—and ensuring adequate access for all?

In the first webinar in the series, focusing on The Spiritual Ecology of Water, join the Forum in dialogue with Jesse Cardinal (Keepers of the Water), Lina Azeez (Watershed Watch Salmon Society), and Joanie and Gary McGuffin (Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy) as we explore the following questions:

- How are we connected to water, physically and spiritually?
- How does water nurture us and how do we experience this?
- What do spiritual traditions teach us about the importance of water and how can we connect more deeply with it?
- What do they teach us about the need to defend and protect water?
- From an ecological perspective, how is water currently under threat? (ex. deforestation, climate change, mining, pipelines, etc.)
- What are the implications of those threats for the well-being of all living creatures?
- What is calling us to a change of heart (or ecological conversion) and concrete action?

[Register for this online event.](#)

Great Lakes Spirituality Project – March 3 at 7pm

Join us for a wonderful evening of music, poetry, photography and science about the Rivers of the Great Lakes. Dan Robinson, with the Great Lakes Spirituality Project, and Margaret Wooster, former head of Great Lakes United, will give the presentation, "Hidden Connections" on Thursday, Mar. 3, 7:00 PM EST on Zoom. [The evening is free and you can register here.](#)

Salt contamination of Lake Simcoe a frightening warning about highway expansion

Models indicate that 64 per cent of plants and animals in Lake Simcoe may already be affected by salt contamination. Having saltier water allows for easier invasions from salt water species into our freshwater lakes, and having more salt in low-oxygen water helps create conditions for harmful algae blooms, which make the water dangerous to swim in and drink. [Read the full article.](#)

Phosphorus levels in Lake Nepahwin cause for concern (Sudbury)

Gunn says increased algae growth caused by high phosphorus levels is also compounded by another environmental problem — road salt. Gunn says road salt affects zooplankton, which he describes as the "little lawnmowers that eat algae." As those organisms die, algae thrives. [Read the full article.](#)

Reform Gravel Mining Coalition campaign launch video

Join Co-chairs Sarah Harmer & Graham Flint as they welcome many guests in the fight against the unregulated gravel mining industry in Ontario. This inaugural event explores the biggest issues and discusses the mandate of the new coalition.

We Demand A Moratorium Now on all new applications for gravel mining in Ontario, including interim orders and site plan amendments for mining below the water table or that increase licensed tonnages. The purpose of a moratorium is to allow time to conduct a broad consultation process to chart a new path forward. [Watch the event.](#)

Four Reasons to say to No to more Nuclear Power: a Federation Response

A few weeks ago, the Executive Direction of the Federation's Office for Systemic Justice wrote to our Minister of Natural Resources. Sue Wilson CSJ outlines the four best reasons to say no: takes too long to build, is more expensive than alternatives, safe waste storage, and unhealthy mining impacts for humans (especially Indigenous peoples) and the rest of creation. [Read Sue's full letter now on our Blue Community blog page.](#)

Nuclear is a Recipe for Failure

The projected cost of power for a new reactor being proposed by Ontario Power Generation for its Darlington Nuclear Station just east of Toronto will be more than twice what we could pay for wind and solar energy or power from Quebec. This new reactor would also use unproven technology that still produces dangerous radioactive waste and would be located in Canada's biggest urban area. [Read more about plans and the effort to stop it.](#)



The impact of nuclear energy is widespread. Peterborough residents [are fundraising to take a nuclear company to court.](#) The nuclear facility is 25 meters from a school playground.

Canada Needs a Real Plan – And Fast – To Get To Zero Plastic Waste by 2030

Environmental Defence has partnered with more than 50 environmental groups to call on the federal government to end plastic pollution. We need the government to put its full attention, resources and regulatory power to work to reverse the crisis that is overwhelming the world's oceans and natural habitats.

Canadians are the second highest users of plastic, on a per person basis, of any country in the world. We also export plastic waste to Global South countries, where it is often burned and pollutes local air and water, making people sick. [Read more and get involved.](#)

Introduction to Northwatch

As the regional coalition in the northeast, Northwatch assists community based groups around the region to access government and policy-making processes and consultations, and provides representation based on regionally developed positions on environmental concerns and ecological protection.

In addition to acting on these issues as a representative body, Northwatch provides support to local citizens groups addressing these and other environmental concerns in their community. Northwatch is currently working with members and member groups to improve forest management, promote community involvement in mine monitoring and management, and prevent northeastern Ontario from becoming the receiving ground for foreign wastes, including Toronto's garbage, Ontario's biomedical waste, Canada's nuclear reactor fuel waste, and PCB's from around the world. [Find out more on their website.](#)

Land-sharing network building bridges between Saskatchewan farmers, Indigenous community

Soon, Mr. Desjarlais will be hunting elk west of North Battleford, on property owned by those participating in the Treaty Land Sharing Network. Members of the project, which is led by women, have agreed to welcome Indigenous peoples to hunt, gather and practise ceremony – largely without restrictions – on the land they farm.

After a lifetime of being chased away, Mr. Desjarlais is still wrestling with the idea that he is welcome on private property.

Mary Culbertson is the Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan and helped guide the farmers as they formed the land-sharing network. She believes the farmers and ranchers banded together not out of guilt but because of a realization of their treaty responsibilities.

“They are fulfilling the spirit and intent of what treaty was supposed to be,” she said. “Sharing the land. Being partners.”

“True reconciliation isn’t necessarily always supposed to feel good,” Mr. Brass said. “It is supposed to feel like a loss of power. It is supposed to challenge your notions of property ownership. It is supposed to be a shift in power dynamics.” [Read the full story.](#)

Some Reflective Questions:

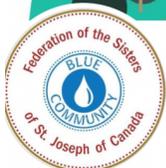
How do we best link the spirituality of water to political campaigns?

What are some personal and collective responses to these threats when the practices and assumptions are so entrenched into our daily living (road salts, nuclear power, gravel, plastics)?

What opportunities does land sharing with Indigenous peoples offer when it comes to healing relationships and co-creating better kinship ties with our neighbours, creation, and the generations to come next?

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



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