



Blue Community Newsletter

February, 2019

WHY A BLUE COMMUNITY?

- We have neighbours without access to clean drinking water.
- The growth of bottled water use in society commodifies creation.
- The risks of water privatization grow without greater public investment.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Reconnect with our watersheds as sources of life, not just resources.
- Reconcile our relations with the lands and waters and the Indigenous nations who continue to protect them.
- Support existing efforts to protect water as a shared commons and sacred gift.
- Examine and change our personal choices that pollute water.

LOOKING AHEAD

During 2018, the CSJ Blue Communities project came to life with a new coordinator and a series of events across the Federation. We learned about water access and quality in our backyards, across the Great Lakes, and globally. A new website holds related sets of resources, invitations for action, and summaries of the 2018 events.

Looking into 2019, our coordinator (Paul Baines) and a Steering Committee (Sr. Bonnie Chesser, Sr. Anne Karges, Sr. Cecily Hewitt, Sr. Loretta Manzara) are happy to share our 2019 goals.

2019 GOALS

- Prepare resources for several CSJ calendar milestones such as: World Water Day (March), International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples (August), World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation (September).
- [Create a resource package for schools and school boards about our shared and sacred connections to water.](#)
- Facilitate a process to create a land & water acknowledgment for each House that honours the Indigenous territory we occupy, the watershed that gives us life, and our commitments for improving both of these relationships.
- [Design education and action guides for CSJ staff.](#)
- Communicate and collaborate within the CSJ and across a growing circle of faith, social justice, and environmental groups to inspire greater waves of change through a wide range of media, experiences, and stories.



TYPES OF ACTIONS WE CAN MAKE

- Support existing efforts to protect water as a shared commons, human right, and sacred gift.
- Reflect on your water impacts through daily choices and intentions.

ACTION EXAMPLES

- Wellington Water Watchers in Guelph Ontario, needs help teaching Canadians about the negative impacts of bottled water and putting limits on this industry.
- The Council of Canadians are researching and holding the Federal government accountable on the promise to end Drinking Water Advisories. Learn and support their work.
- A network of Blue Communities across Canada is affirming public control of water systems. Can your City be added to this network?

NEWS IN THE WATERSHED

LONDON

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians have a NEW website about water rights, water permits, safe drinking water, boycotting Nestle, and with a set of learning resources. They are also hosting a World Water Day Event in London on March 22. **

HAMILTON

The City of Hamilton regularly releases untreated sewage into the lake because its infrastructure (like most older cities in North America) is underdeveloped for heavy rains. Since 2016, enough sewage to fill 2,019 olympic-sized swimming pools has been released and the public was not alerted. Starting in 2019, a public notice protocol will alert people within 24 hours of a release and in 2020 that notice will be shortened to 2 hours.

TORONTO

Ecologos is hosting the 2019 WaterDocs Film Festival March 5 and 20-24 in Toronto. They also host screenings across Ontario and we are in contact with them for those not in Toronto. We are promoting our Blue Communities project in the Festival's program and will be the special guest with space and time to talk to the public at the final screening on Sunday, the 24 at 3pm. **

Joint Ecological Ministry (JEM) is hosting a panel discussion May 22–23 at Loretto College called Decolonization and Climate Change. Speakers include Sylvia McAdam (Idle No More), Jennifer Henry (KAIROS), Delaney Greig (SHARE), Karri Munn-Venn (Citizens for Public Justice), and Paul Baines (CSJ Blue Community). **

On February 2, Sr. Janet Speth and staff organized a water circle for World Interfaith Harmony Week. Two Anishinaabe women led the circle with about 28 people within and beyond the Congregation attending. See our blog post about this event or more details. **



DID YOU KNOW?

WIPES that are popular for cleaning up messes are often flushed down the toilet and then clog up the water system.

Unlike toilet paper, these baby wipes or flushable wipes don't break down, jam water pipes across the city, and add costs onto stressed public water infrastructure.

These wipes are made from plastic and after heavy rains they can bypass the treatment plant and end up directly in waterways.

Lake Ontario Waterkeeper recently did an investigation into this issue. They visited the City of London's water plant to learn more.

SEE the video report on our website.

BlueCommunityCSJ.org

NEWS IN THE WATERSHED

PEMBROKE

There is a new citizen-led group protecting the Ottawa River. The Ottawa Water Study/Action Group has been very active these past few weeks on the issues of tap water quality and banning bottled water. They have a Facebook group. **

PETERBOROUGH

For World Water Day, the Sacred Water Circle is hosting pancake breakfast Saturday, March 23 from 8 to 11 am to raise funds for their annual Mothers Day Sacred Water Walk. On May 12 they are walking and praying around Rice Lake. **

SUDBURY



Volunteers from the Katimavik organization recently constructed a giant billboard to honour Anishinaabe culture and place-names. Project Bitimagamasing is the result of a 6-month long reconciliation effort in Sudbury with various groups including the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre. "Bitimagamasing" is the Anishinaabe word for what many now call "Ramsey Lake". The Blue Communities project gave a small donation to this act of service.

On April 14, Blue Communities coordinator Paul Baines will speak at the Catholic Women's League regional luncheon with CWL members from about 14 parishes attending. Their theme for the year is Care for our Common Home. **

** more details and links on our website

NEWS IN THE WATERSHED

Farewell to Water Warrior Grandmother Josephine Mandamin as she begins her final journey home

With the passing of Grandmother Josephine Mandamin (1942-2019), Canada has lost a visionary who made calling for cleaner water and greater water protection her life's work. Logging more than 10,000 miles on sacred water walks around the perimeter of all five of the Great Lakes and numerous other waterways around the world to raise awareness about the need to protect water, Grandmother Josephine was an embodiment of the phrase "walk the talk".



"Obi Wan Kenobi Kwe"
Grandmother Josephine
Mandamin - 1942-2019

Photo: Tasha Beeds

Text: Ecologos

**We want to hear from you.
What questions do you have about this
project? How can we better honour water
as a human right, shared commons, and
sacred gift in your community?**

contact Paul Baines:

blue.communities.now@gmail.com

see the website:

www.BlueCommunitiesCSJ.org



DID YOU KNOW?

For the past four decades, evidence has shown that privatisation of water and sanitation often increases costs for governments and low income households. It has not been efficient or cost effective. It has reduced quality and undermined access, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable in society.

There is an alternative to privatisation. Evidence from 235 cases of water remunicipalisation in 37 countries between 2000 and 2015, shows that quality and publicly provided water and sanitation services are far more accountable, better quality, financially transparent, efficient and cost effective. They are better at meeting the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable in society and respecting the human rights to these services.

By Mark Beaton (End Water Poverty).
Read the full article on our website.

**** more details and links on our website**