



Troubled Waters, Part 2

Protecting Our Taps

Friday, November 5, 7-9pm, Alcott School,
Concord, MA

Speakers' Biographical Information

Keynote Speaker

Ruth Caplan is National Campaign Coordinator for the Alliance for Democracy's Defending Water for Life Campaign and past chair of the national Sierra Club's Water Privatization Task Force.

Defending Water for Life organizes on the West Coast and in New England. In New Hampshire, Ruth helped the town of Barnstead pass the first ordinance in the country to declare water to be a fundamental right, to deny corporations the right to take the water for profit, and to deny corporations constitutional rights in the town. In Maine, the campaign has been working with towns to prevent Nestle from taking spring water for their Poland Spring brand and has connected the issue of climate change with the need to protect water in watersheds.

In 2003, she helped to organize a national gathering of water activists which formed the Water Allies Network, a diverse national network of people and groups who believe "secure and equitable access to clean water is a human right and must be protected for all generations and all living things."

She is author of the discussion guide for the documentary Thirst published by Sierra Club and distributed by Bullfrog Films which follows water organizers from protests at the corporate-sponsored World Water Forum in Kyoto to the locations around the world where they are organizing. She is also interviewed in the documentary Tapped.

Her focus on water grew out of her work with an international network, Our World Is Not For Sale, formed to stem corporate globalization and loss of local democratic authority which are promoted by international trade agreements. She focused on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and its impact on public services. She is author of "Trading Away Our Water: How Trade Agreements Promote Corporate Water Profiteering" and has spoken on college campuses and in local communities across the country.

She was awarded the national Sierra Club's 2004 Special Service Award for her work on corporate accountability, international trade, water privatization, and energy policy.

In addition, Ruth has looked at alternative economic systems through the interdisciplinary Economics Working Group which she coordinated and which produced a General Agreement on a New Economy, GANE, not GATT, a community centered system for full employment and local sustainability with functions at the regional and national levels.

Previously, Ruth was Executive Director of Environmental Action and Environmental Action Foundation, national organizations created to continue building the national grassroots movement begun by the first Earth Day in 1970. She is author of Our Earth, Ourselves, published by Bantam and written with her staff.

Her environmental career began in 1971 as a founding member of Ecology Action of Oswego NY where she played a key role in regional organizing and successful legal appeals which prevented the construction of three nuclear units and a nuclear waste incinerator on Lake Ontario and which set a national precedent requiring the Atomic Energy Commission to consider energy conservation and renewable energy as alternatives under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Life in the Balance: Troubled Waters, Part 2 – Protecting Our Taps

Panel Speakers

Alan H. Cathcart has been working within the public utilities arena for over 24 years, serving as the Superintendent for Concord (MA) Public Works, Water/Sewer Division since 1996. He holds a Masters Degree in Geology, from Boston University with a focus in hydrogeology.

In 1985, his interest in applied environmental science led him to Littleton (MA) Water Department where he helped establish a nationally recognized Drinking Water Resource Protection and Monitoring Program. This program, which included facility audits coupled with early warning groundwater and surface water monitoring activities, became a model for federal and state Wellhead Protection regulations.

During his tenure in Concord, he has been responsible for planning, organizing, directing and controlling all operations and activities of the Water and Sewer Division and related distribution, collection, storage and treatment systems in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.

He is an active member of a number of professional trade associations and has served in an advisory capacity on a number of state regulatory and policy committees and task forces charged with addressing emerging Water Supply Protection and quality issues. He currently represents the Massachusetts Water Works Association on the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' "Sustainable Water Management Advisory Committee".

Valerie A. Lane is an environmental and management consultant with expertise developing proactive, value-added environmental management strategies based on transparency. Her strategy and policy development work is based on insight and wisdom gained from 28 years combined experience as an environmental consultant and land management executive in the oil and gas industry. Ms. Lane's focus is litigation prevention and dispute resolution to reclaim resources for more beneficial use.

Beginning her career at the University of Waterloo as a field research hydrogeologist, Ms. Lane investigated large, industrial chemical releases to the environment. She has 14 years experience as a consulting hydrogeologist specializing in contaminant fate and transport of oil, petroleum products, chlorinated solvents, PCBs, and endocrine-disrupting compounds. Ms. Lane's technical expertise includes environmental forensics to determine sources, timing, and distribution of contamination; peer review of scientific opinions, studies, and methods; and technology selection, implementation, and effectiveness for site investigations and remediation of contaminated sites.

With 10 years experience as a consulting expert for environmental litigation, Ms. Lane's expertise includes personal injury, natural resource damages, insurance cost recovery, and cost allocation cases. She typically consults for environmental damages at sites with complex technical problems and sensitive social issues where the value of damages is very high (\$5 Billion to date).

Ms. Lane's 14 years experience in the oil and gas industry includes work as an environmental consultant and petroleum landman. Her experience includes effective negotiation of environmental damage settlements, as well as successful dispute resolution for complex environmental, field operation, and contractual disputes. Ms. Lane permanently resolved disputes and transformed hostile relationships into cooperative partnerships.

(10/20/2010)