

AfD's Defending Water for Life Campaign

Spring Forward

Plan education and actions now for March and to April and May

Water is the essence of life. But, now, because water resources are finite and increasingly polluted, a public resource for the benefit of all has become Blue Gold for corporate profit. This is unacceptable! To ensure safe and affordable water for all now and in the future, we must work together to oppose any proposals to shift operation or ownership of public systems to private corporations and counter corporate marketing strategies, such as for bottled water, that promote water as just another commercial good rather than a resource – the most essential of the commons - to be held in the public trust.

Over the past three years, AfD's Defending Water for Life Campaign has been involved in the New England area and California, working with our members and allies to preserve and expand local democratic control of water resources and water services. The campaign has worked in coalition with other groups and together celebrated some victories when corporate profiteers have been defeated.

But transnational corporations like Nestle, Coca Cola, Pepsi are moving aggressively to make us all dependent on bottled water while other corporations like RWE and Suez want to control our municipal services. The 4th World Water Forum, being held in Mexico City this year from March 16-22, is sponsored by these very corporations and their financial backers, including the IMF and the World Bank. Activists from around the world and especially from across the Americas will be there holding alternative forums and demonstrations proclaiming that water is a human right. We must act now to ensure that the rights of people and nature are protected not the rights of corporations.

Now is the time for us to mobilize here in the U.S. in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world. We must make it clear to the privatizers at the World Water Forum that we don't want transnational corporations controlling our water.

Here are some ideas for events you can hold in your community. For assistance and materials, please contact Ruth Caplan, Coordinator of the Defending Water for Life campaign, 202 244-0561, rcaplan@igc.org or Nancy Price, Western Coordinator, 530 758-0726 nancytprice@juno.com

*** Plan an event for March 22, World Water Day**

This is the last day of the World Water Forum in Mexico City, where the privatizers meet with the policymakers to press forward with their agenda. This is a great time for your chapter to plan an educational event or action in solidarity with Civil Society groups from across the Americas. This is also a good opportunity to team up with local church and labor constituencies when you plan community events such as a forum or film showing.

***Plan to show these award-winning movies during the Spring months**

Thirst (62 minutes) and In the Light of Reverence (73 minutes). Both films are available in high-quality color DVD or VHS format. The documentary Thirst was filmed at the last World Water Forum held in Kyoto and shows activists confronting the corporate privatizers. Ruth and Nancy were both there taking part in the action. It also shows what activists are doing back home in Stockton CA, Cochabamba Bolivia and Rajasthan India to keep water out of corporate hands. In the Light of Reverence portrays the sacredness of water from an indigenous perspective.

To rent a copy from the AfD office email Barbara Clancy at afd@thealliancefordemocracy.org or call the Waltham, MA office 781-894-1179. Order you own copy from Bullfrog Films, Oley, PA at 1-800-543-3764 (toll-free) at \$59.00 plus \$6.00 for shipping/handling for community groups. Ask for donations at the door. See also <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com>. Study Guides are available: by Ruth Caplan for Thirst www.thirstthemovie.com/ThirstStudyGuide.pdf and for In the Light of Reverence <http://www.sacredland.org> and Study Guide www.sacredland.org/resources.html

*** Speak out and “Just Say No” to Bottled Water**

Order - Inside the Bottle: An Expose of the Bottle Water Industry, by Tony Clarke. Inside the Bottle Exposes how the big four - Nestlé, PepsiCo, Coca-Cola and Danone – have created and dominate the bottled water industry. It examines key issues of public concern about their operations and identifies what people can do in their communities. To order email the Polaris Institute at insidethebottle@polarisinstitute.org Cost is \$15 Canadian + shipping (or \$13 US + shipping). Bulk orders of the book are also available for groups to use as an educational and fundraising tool for local water struggles!

*** Arrange for presentation of AfD’s new “Tapestry of the Commons” Project**

Water, the most essential of our natural commons, is a fundamental human right. This presentation is a good way to get everyone thinking on their feet as they help weave the tapestry of the commons. For details www.thealliancefordemocracy.org If you would like to have a presentation this spring contact Nancy Price nancytprice@juno.com or Jan Edwards janedwards@mcn.org

For the big picture on corporate water privatization see:

Alliance for Democracy “Defending Water for Life” Campaign
www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/water

Public Citizen “Water for All” Campaign <http://www.citizen.org/cmep/Water/> Public Citizen has a wide range of reports, factsheets and other materials. See in particular the new report Waves of Regret: what some cities have learned and other cities should know about the water privatization fiascos in the United States (June 2005) at <http://www.citizen.org/documents/waves.pdf> Public Citizen’s Water for All Campaign is now called Food and Water Watch and the website is under construction at www.foodandwaterwatch.org

Sierra Club Corporate Water Privatization Task Force <http://www.sierraclub.org/cac/water> educates and advocates to prevent corporate control of water and municipal water/sewer services and to minimize use of bottled water in order to protect ecosystems and community health and to promote democratic decision-making and environmental justice. The brochure Bottled Water: Learning the Facts and Taking Action can be printed out at http://www.sierraclub.org/cac/water/bottled_water/bottled_water.pdf

Water Allies Network www.waterallies.org. See campaign on Bottled Water and one also on Clean Water – Healthy Communities with a focus on the Precautionary Principle.

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom Save the Water Campaign at <http://wilpf.org/campaigns/water/default.htm> Order the 8 - part “Save the Water” Curriculum Study Guide from Kate Zaidan, Program Coordinator at kzaidan@wilpf or (215) 563-7110.

World Water Forum <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org>. Learn what the World Water Council is planning. Beware the Council is dominated by corporations and the IMF and World Bank; the goal is privatization of water services and resources. But the wolf is covered in sheep’s skin to look innocent.