Putting the Lid on Bottled Water – Rethinking Water as a Community Resource

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How Much Water is There?

All the water in the world, including sea water, ice, lakes, rivers, ground water, clouds, etc., is approximately 1.4087 billion cubic kilometers
How Much Water is There?

All water on Earth

- Unusable 99%

Water usable by humans 1%

- Groundwater 99%
  - Lakes 0.86%
  - Rivers 0.02%
How Much Bottled Water Do We Drink in the U.S.?
Amount of Liquid Consumed by the Average U.S. American

Tap water included sports drinks until 1992

New York Times graph
Source: Beverage Digest
U.S. Americans

- Drank, on average, **21 gallons** each of bottled water in 2006
- Bought, in total, **8.82 billion gallons** of bottled water in 2007
- Purchased, in total, **30 billion** single-serving bottles
- Spent, in total, **$11.7 billion** on purchasing bottled water in 2007

- according to Beverage Marketing
and Worldwide:

- 47 billion gallons of bottled water were sold in 2006 - according to Beverage Marketing
Why is there so much increase in bottled water use?
What’s good about it?
What’s bad about it?
Why should you care about it?
What can you do about it?
Why is there so much increase in bottled water use over the past few years?
Bottled Water is Cool!
Bottled Water Tastes Better

- Some tap water does have a strong smell and/or taste that bothers people.

- In a “very trendy” restaurant in California: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2qydjVbLJk

- Numerous examples of local taste tests where people choose tap water over bottled water.

- Home filters or storing tap water in the fridge for a couple of hours can remove chlorine taste.
Bottled Water Tastes Better (cont)

- Informal taste test in Winona, taken April 3, 2008

Out of 56 people, the number who rated sample as excellent:

- City of Winona Tap Water
- Chippewa Spring Water
- Kandiyohi Purified Water
- Glenwood Spring Water
Bottle Water is Healthier

- Bottled water regulated by Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Public city water regulated by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- In New York city, tap water was tested 430,600 times in 2004 alone.
- Natural Resources Defense Council (www.nrdc.org)
  - 4 year scientific study
  - 1,000 brands of bottled water
  - Found that 33% of the bottles tested violated industry standards
Bottle Water Companies Care

- Fiji Green: [http://www.fijigreen.com/](http://www.fijigreen.com/)
Some of the Benefits
Disaster Relief

- 2 weeks ago, 6.8 million bottles of water were given out by relief centers to people in Louisiana after Hurricane Gustav moved through.

- Right now, millions of bottles of water being distributed to victims of Hurricane Ike.

- Significant aid to other countries in times of water shortages and natural disasters.
Other Benefits

- Bottled water may have a better smell and taste due to the blend of minerals and method of processing.

- Plastic bottles are light and convenient to carry.

- Economics of the water industry – jobs for lots of people
Some of the Problems
The Cost

- 9/13/08 at the Kwik Trip on Huff and Sarnia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>20 oz</th>
<th>Gallon</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aquafina</td>
<td>$1.29</td>
<td>$8.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dasani</td>
<td>$1.29</td>
<td>$8.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature’s Touch</td>
<td>$.99</td>
<td>$6.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chippewa</td>
<td>$1.09</td>
<td>$6.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Gas</td>
<td></td>
<td>$3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tap water</td>
<td>$.002</td>
<td>$.0128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Energy

- It takes water to make bottled water
  - about **three liters** of water used
to produce **one liter** of bottled water

- It takes oil to make bottled water
  - energy equivalent of **714 million gallons** of oil
    used in U.S.
  - energy equivalent of **4.2 billion gallons** of oil
    used globally each year
The bottled water has to be transported to the stores –

- Fiji water has to travel about **4,000 miles** to get to Winona

- according to Pacific Institute [www.pacinst.org](http://www.pacinst.org)
The Environment

- In the U.S., less than **20% of water bottles** are recycled
  - according to the Container Recycling Institute

- **1.5 million** tons of plastic waste annually,
  - according to the Sierra Club

- Bottling water produced more than **2.5 million tons** of carbon dioxide
  - according to Pacific Institute
“I’m not going to let the *enviro wackos* make me feel guilty for drinking bottled water!”

Eddie, June 18, 2008, businessweek.com blog entry
Isn’t it Our Own Choice

What if

• I don’t like the taste of the city water?
• And, I do recycle my plastic water bottles?
• And, I have enough money to buy bottled water?

Isn’t it my choice how I spend my own money?
Maybe a Better Question Is

- How else could we spend all this money?
Access to Safe Water

- More than **one billion** people in the world lack reliable access to safe drinking water
- More than **2.6 billion** people in the world lack basic sanitation
- Estimated that **80%** of all illness in the world is due to water-borne diseases

- according to The World Health Organization
Clean Water for Everybody

- Clean water could be provided for everyone on earth for an initial outlay of $1.7 billion beyond current spending on water projects.

- Improving sanitation would cost an additional $9.3 billion per year.

according to International Water Management Institute, 2005
That’s Less Than

- $11.7 billion spent on bottled water in 2007 – just in the U.S.!
What Can We Do?
Drinking Fountains

- Public drinking fountains can provide free, safe water for everybody
- Public drinking fountains are becoming less available
  - Not as many built in cities
  - Some existing ones don’t work
  - Some are pretty scary to drink from!
A Winona Community Project

Our Drinking Fountains, Our Water – a year-long initiative for us to learn about water issues and celebrate our water commons.
Collaborative Project
Project Components

- **CLASP Lecture Series (!)**
- **Common Book – The Blue Death**
- **Frozen River Film Festival in January**  
  Drinking water is one of the festival themes  
  Festival will open with a showing of FLOW
- **Earth Day Festival in April**  
  Water will be main theme  
  Parade of Species will be extra special this year
Project Components (cont)

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre will be doing two week-long residencies here in Winona

www.hobt.org
Project Components (cont)

Adopt-a-Drinking-Fountain

A Winona city-wide event this coming spring, where groups will adopt a drinking fountain in their building and decorate it.
Lake Park Drinking Fountain Contest
Local artists will compete for a $12,000 prize to decorate the outside drinking fountain at Lake Park.