

## ***WATER POLICY ~ WATER RIGHTS***

*From our passion for the truth and desire to be faithful to it,  
may these ideas provide dialogue in the pursuit  
of creating a sustainable relationship with water.*

**Water rights are traditionally legal rights for humans to use water from surface or below surfaces sources. We live in a world that has treated water rights as we do mineral rights or property rights, yet we fail to legally codify common sense: without water, there can be no human community.**

**Water comes from a watershed. A watershed is designed to manage the water cycle and to provide the water usable for life dependent on freshwater. A watershed obeys the rules and regulations established by the laws of Nature; water knows no boundaries, nor can it be subjugated to human laws.**

**A watershed is more a verb than a noun, more a process than a drainage basin that channels water.**

**Water rights policy should reflect one fundamental truth: watersheds don't need us, but we need watersheds.**

**How do we craft water rights legislation to establish a relationship with water and watersheds that doesn't compromise a watershed's capacity to provide for human usage and to sustain all communities, including human, that are dependent on that watershed?**

**Shouldn't water rights reflect a variation of the US Public Trust Doctrine: water in a watershed "belongs" in trust for use by the stakeholders of that watershed human and all other life forms that call that watershed "home"?**

**Shouldn't water rights reflect a "Reasonable Use" standard: permission to access and use water which doesn't adversely compromise the watershed? Shouldn't such policy be determined by data and science, not politics and economics?**

**Sustaining a healthy watershed sustains the human community. Disrupting the watershed threatens the human community.**