



WATSON INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

BROWN UNIVERSITY

Land & Water Conference

Brown University, September 4-5, 2015

Most events will be held at the Watson Institute, 111 Thayer St, Providence, RI 02912.

Addresses by John Barry, Laura Gottesdiener, and Sudipta Sen will be held at the Friedman Auditorium in Metcalf Hall, 190 Thayer St, Providence, RI 02912.

Various panels will be livecast on our website;
videos of keynote speakers will be posted there roughly a week after the conference:
<http://landandwaterconference.com/>

Please tweet #landandwater

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

8am Registration opens (Watson Institute, 111 Thayer St, main foyer)

9-10am **John Barry, keynote address on "Water, Oil, Politics, and Justice In the Bayou – and what it means for everywhere else"** Introduction by Aaron Regunberg, RI House of Representatives
(Friedman Auditorium in Metcalf Hall, 190 Thayer St)

10-11am Coffee reception (Watson Institute, 111 Thayer St, main foyer)

Orientation for the facilitators of breakout sessions (Willow Brugh, orientating) (Birkelund Board Room, 1st floor, Watson Institute)

Session 1a 11am-12:15pm (Panels)

- **Panel, “Control, Monopoly, and Exclusion”** (Joukowsky Forum, 1st floor south, Watson Institute)
 - This panel will address corruption and exploitation in systems of land or water ownership, including the results of control, monopoly, and exclusion. How has power historically determined the inequitable distribution of natural resources? How are activists, scholars, and corporations working against the digital divide and using technology to redress issues of environmental degradation and public health in developing nations and remote areas? How are coercive land distribution methods creating further tensions that run along a racial, gender, and class nexus? (Keisha-Khan Perry, Moderator)
 - panelists:
 - Tryon P. Woods, University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, on the usurpation of black neighborhoods
 - Emily Lane, of Arkansas Fracking (ArkansasFracking.org), on geographies of disadvantage and compromised water in fracking country
 - Steven Stoll, Fordham University, on land dispossession in 19th century Appalachia and the myth that extractive industry promotes the region’s progress
 - Malchus Mills, of Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE), on community organizing to challenge foreclosure in Providence
 - Imdad Hussain, Forman Christian College and Punjab Urban Resource Centre, on the neoliberal conceptualization of drinking water in Pakistan
 - Sarah Besky, Brown University, on infrastructure failure and the struggle for land by Indian Nepalis in West Bengal

- **Panel, “Technology and Infrastructure”** (McKinney Conference Room, 3rd floor south, Watson Institute)
 - Participants will discuss the role of technology in renegotiating rights and stewardship of the environment. Examples may include participatory mapping, cheap technologies for monitoring air and water quality, and speculation about solar and other sustainable futures, centralized under the state or decentralized through the power of many-to-many technology. (Caroline Karp, moderator)
 - panelists:
 - Dorn Cox, of Farm Hack, on open-source engineering and the economic support of smallholders
 - Mark Healey, University of Connecticut, on dams, territory, and utopian schemes for water governance in Argentina

- Don Blair, of Public Lab, on the new cheap age of water quality monitoring, solar, and everything else
- Timothy Gorman, Cornell University, on the politics of water management infrastructure and salinity control in the Mekong River Delta
- David Kinkela, State University of New York, on the history of plastic waste

12:15–1:15pm Break for lunch (Watson Institute, main foyer)

Session 1b 1:15–2:15pm (Breakout sessions)

- **“Control, Monopoly, and Exclusion”** (Joukowsky Forum, 1st floor south, Watson Institute)
 - A facilitated plenary discussion will continue the conversation about corruption and exploitation in systems of land or water ownership, and how individuals and environments suffer the results of control, monopoly, and exclusion. (Beshara Doumani, facilitator)
- **“Technology and Infrastructure”** (Kim Koo Library, 3rd floor north, Watson Institute)
 - A facilitated small-group discussion will continue the conversation about the role of technology in renegotiating rights and stewardship of the environment. (Dorn Cox, facilitator)
- **“Speed-dating for Activists and Academics”** (Starr Plaza, outside, OR in case of rain McKinney Conference Room, 3rd floor south, Watson Institute)
 - A programmed small-group “speed-dating”-type session for activists and academics to meet each other and arm each other with stories, news, strategy, or inspiration (in pairs, 7 min ea). (Vanessa Fabien, facilitator)

Session 2a 2:15–3:30 (Panels)

- **Panel, “Utopian Solutions”** (Joukowsky Forum, 1st floor south, Watson Institute)
 - Discussions of long-term futures have emphasized the importance of having a shared vision of utopian strategies for a better world, including debt forgiveness, food security, a universal right to freedom

from displacement, and a right to water. What critical theories of resource allocation can help us to imagine a more just world? Through what new strategies might that change come about? (Dawn King, Moderator)

○ panelists:

- Christopher England, Georgetown University, on Henry George and why the rent is so damn high
- Paul Graham Raven, University of Sheffield, UK, on how metasystemic infrastructure reifies the post-Enlightenment dichotomy between society and nature, and the potential for more sustainable infrastructures
- Thomas Summerhill, Michigan State University, on the historical successes and failures of democratic rural movements in New York and what they can tell us about the age of fracking
- Tess Brown-Lavoie, of Young Farmer Network and Sidewalk Ends Farms, on the future of farming
- Jim Hafner of Land for Good on the role of land tenure, reform and forms of "management" as environmental/land enclosure

● **Panel, “Analytical Methods”** (McKinney Conference Room, 3rd floor south, Watson Institute)

○ How are writers, scholars, and advocates thinking about tensions in access to land and water in new ways? This panel profiles cutting-edge work from researchers and activists rethinking the question of rights, agency, and causality. Topics may include looking at the long term and the short term, thinking about the agency of the natural world itself, remembering and reviving forgotten strategies in the history of land and water struggles, using big data and mapping to tell the history of rights to land and water, unpacking how energy companies present the story of “nature”, and questioning or revisiting the categories of “land”, “water”, or “rights”. (Robert Self, moderator)

○ panelists:

- Andrew Sartori, New York University, pushes beyond “accumulation by dispossession” by looking at injustice in 19th century Bengal
- Garrett Nelson, University of Wisconsin-Madison, presents a history of new conceptions of territory that challenge power
- David Bond, Bennington College, on objectifying “nature” in the Canadian tar sands
- Matthew Battles, Harvard University, on calling a species invasive
- Sigma Colón, Yale University, on river pollution and its invisibility

3:30-4 Coffee break (Watson Institute, main foyer)

Session 2b 4-5pm (Breakout sessions)

- **“Utopian Solutions”** (Joukowsky Forum, 1st floor south, Watson Institute)
 - A facilitated plenary discussion: What critical theories of resource allocation can help us to imagine a more just world? How might that change come about? (Camilo Viveiros, facilitator)

- **“Analytical Methods”** (McKinney Conference Room, 3rd floor south, Watson Institute)
 - A small group discussion, asking the question, how are we thinking about tensions in access to land and water in new ways? (Steven Stoll, facilitator)

- **“The Next Big Project” (opportunity one of two!)** (Starr Plaza, outside, OR in case of rain, Kim Koo Library, 3rd floor south, Watson Institute)
 - Come to this session ready to hear about the plans of others at the conference, *or* come ready to tell us about your next big project (a book? a campaign?), be it something well underway or a dream that’s just occurred to you. This small-group format and large-group discussion will offer a chance to get concise feedback within the hour -- or an opportunity to engage what other conference participants are dreaming up next, and perhaps find new allies in the process! (Matthew Battles, facilitator)

5:30-6:30pm **Laura Gottesdiener, plenary on “Water, Housing, and Land: The Battle for American Cities”** Introduction:
Camilo Vivieros, George Wiley Center, Providence
(Friedman Auditorium in Metcalf Hall, 190 Thayer St)

Dinner off campus at participants’ leisure

[6:45 pm A dinner will be provided to thank facilitators, moderators, and keynote speakers at Kabob & Curry, 261 Thayer St, Providence, RI 02906]

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

8am Registration opens (Watson Institute, 111 Thayer St, main foyer)

9–10am **Sudipta Sen, plenary on “The River's Two Bodies: A Brief History of the Purity and Pollution of the Ganga”**

Introduction: Leah VanWey, Senior Deputy Director, Institute at Brown for Environment and Society

(Friedman Auditorium in Metcalf Hall, 190 Thayer St)

10–11am Coffee reception (Watson Institute, 111 Thayer St, main foyer)

Session 3a 11–12:30pm (Panels)

- **“Organizing Strategies”** (Joukowsky Forum, 1st floor south, Watson Institute)
 - How are scholars and grassroots organizations collaborating and forming new alliances to create trusts for landownership and advocate for democratic food systems? How are the strategies in labor and land reform movements changing the nature of the discourse on utopian societies? What are the identifying strategies that mark major activist organizations, i.e. Civil Rights Movement, Feminist Movement, ... and what are the strengths and weakness of each organizing tactic? What forgotten episodes in the history of organizing could lend inspiration now? (Liz Barry, Moderator)
 - panelists:
 - Luke Metzger, of Environment Texas, on successful fights against oil and coal in Texas
 - Liz Barry, of Public Lab, on mashing up local place-specific organizing with online distributed peer production
 - Aaron Regunberg, RI House of Representatives, on organizing in Rhode Island
 - Severine von Tscherner Fleming, of Greenhorns, on organizing for massive land turnover

● **“Maps and Surveys”** (McKinney Conference Room, 3rd floor south, Watson Institute)

- This panel will revisit the map or survey as an instrument for seeing or negotiating rights, as well as more abstract spaces of analysis. How, in the past, have cadasters, master plans, and land registration been tools of exclusion, monopoly, and control? How are Geographic Information Systems (GIS), participatory mapping tools, and smartphone apps helping activists to document areas that are vulnerable to environmental and social justice issues and raise awareness of possible solidarities? How can we understand the way land has been divided as a feature of power? (John Logan, moderator)

○ panelists:

- Noelani Puniwai, University of Hawaii, on using sensors to gather a community around a changing coastal environment and conversations about its long-term future
- Laura Jane Martin, Harvard University, on the concept of the “sacrifice zone”
- Paula Segal, of 596 acres, on online tools that clear hurdles to community land access in New York City
- Matthew Shutzer, New York University, on the control of water resources in India's coal mines during the early twentieth century as a means of thinking about land acquisition and regional mapping
- Richard Adam Hall, of Coal River Mountain Watch, on the historical context of absentee landownership and its relation to the present day social and economic climate of central Appalachia
- Ademide Adelusí-Adeluyi, University of California–Riverside, on maps and the history of urban space, lagoons and colonial place-making in 1850s Lagos

● **“Challenging Control and Power, a Long-Term Perspective”** (Kim Koo Library, 3rd floor north, Watson Institute)

- What is the deep past of how access to credit, real estate, and food security has been shaped by race, gender, and class? How is access to finance and power changing? What organizing strategies are being used to challenge or open up access to land and water to prepare us for the possibility of a long future? (Michael Murphy, moderator)

○ panelists:

- Matthew Cragoe, University of Lincoln, on the history of land struggles in Britain since the 1700s
- Peter Bent, University of Massachusetts–Amherst, on the story of land reform and peasant resistance in Egypt
- Vanessa Fabien, Brown University, on civil rights, Black power, and the environment

- Matt Margetta, Brown University, on non-government alternatives to FEMA's flood insurance program
- Steven DeCaprio, of Land Action, on planting 100 microfarms for food sustainability in Oakland, California
- Chandana Anusha, Yale University, on rights-based claims to the forest in western India

12:30-1:30pm Break for lunch (Watson Institute, main foyer)

Session 3b 1:30-2:30pm (Breakout sessions)

- **“Organizing Strategies”** (Starr Plaza, outside, OR in case of rain, Joukowsky Forum, 1st floor south, Watson Institute)
 - Facilitated plenary discussion: organizing strategies, including maps as tools for negotiating change. (Liz Barry, facilitator)
- **“What would you do with \$1 million?”** (McKinney Conference Room, 3rd floor south, Watson Institute)
 - This discussion offers a chance to pursue blue-skies thinking about the big picture. What’s the grant you would write, the conference you would organize, the campaign you would throw, or the startup you would launch if you had sufficient access to funds? Small group conversations and large group discussions will lead to meeting new allies and looking at wider horizons together. (Don Blair, facilitator)
- **“Long-Term Thinking”** (Kim Koo Library, 3rd floor north, Watson Institute)
 - What periodizations illuminate big changes in access to land and water? Should we think in terms of the Anthropocene, the age of enclosure, the age of capitalism, or the age of financialization, when we talk about today’s water wars and land grabs? This facilitated small-group discussion will offer the opportunity to talk about different large-scale historical epochs and their influence on later political crises. (Luke Smith, facilitator)

2:30-3:30pm Coffee break

Session 4a 3:30–5pm (Panels)

- **Panel, “The Commons vs Individual Proprietorship”** (Joukowsky Forum, 1st floor south, Watson Institute)
 - This panel brings together scholars of the peasant-owned commons, activists who are reinstalling a collective right to land, representatives of groups who represent indigenous property rights, and thinkers about individual proprietorship, to talk about different systems of formal allocations of land and water. What does it mean to have a right to land, a right to food, or a right to water? What are the vulnerabilities of each of these systems, and how are they being refashioned into new forms around us? (Kealoha Kinney, moderator)
 - panelists:
 - Caroline Karp, Brown University, on the capture and commercialization of submerged lands
 - Matthew Hoffman, Cornell University, on community ownership in Scottish land reform
 - John Zinda, Brown University, on-the-ground surprises in China's Collective Forest Tenure Reform
 - Atul Pokharel, Brown University, on change over the last thirty years to commons in Nepal
 - Mir Anjum Altaf, Habib University, Pakistan, on the changing nature of access to urban water supply in Pakistan

- **Panel, “The Anthropocene”** (Kim Koo Library, 3rd floor north, Watson Institute)
 - This panel will bring together classicists, historians, and folks who work on present-day drought and land confiscations to ask what we know about this moment today. In other historical moments, climate change has disrupted societies (such as the little ice age in Europe). But this moment of human-generated climate change since the industrial revolution is different, structured by global capitalism and finance. What lessons can be learned about the influence of climate disruption on particularly vulnerable groups? What kinds of shocks in terms of farming, food security, water access, mass migration, and the overload of existing resources should we expect, and what, if any, are the models of co-responsibility that can provide a narrative for how to move forward? (Graham Oliver, moderator)
 - panelists:
 - Daniel Aldana Cohen, New York University, on the drought in São Paulo and its connections to housing, land use, and climate

- Tamara Coger, Brown University, on new challenges facing farmers in West Africa
- Alejo Kraus-Polk, University of California-Davis, on the end of cheap water and development as we know it in the American West
- Sudipta Sen, University of California-Davis, on the deep history of pre-human commons

● **Panel, “Present-day Emergencies and What They Have in Common”**

(McKinney Conference Room, 3rd floor south, Watson Institute)

- Our conference brings together many individuals who themselves have lived through the experience of foreclosure crises, debt crises, mass migrations, and campaigns of resistance, or who have collected these stories in a spirit of solidarity. This panel will offer an opportunity to hear and share those stories, making connections between urban foreclosure crises in Providence and land grabs in West Africa; between short-distance migration out of Detroit or New Orleans and long-distance migration from Bangladesh. What can we learn from telling these stories together? Who are the new actors who are struggling to transform society and government today? (Sarah Besky, moderator)
- panelists:
 - Sara Berry, Johns Hopkins University, on access to land in Africa and changes in the last 25 years
 - Daniel Tubb, Yale University, postdoctoral fellow, on gold-based money laundering in the Colombian cocaine market
 - Rebecca Nedostup, Brown University, on how the state used refugees to grab land in China and Taiwan, and on the strategizing of displacement more generally
 - Madhuri Karak, The Graduate Center at the City University of New York, on guerilla insurgency, *adivasi* futures and expropriation in southeastern India
 - Emily Harris, of Faulkner County Citizens Advisory Group, on the holistic failures of emergency response management
 - David Ludden, New York University, on global crises of shrimp farming and garment factories in Bangladesh
 - Keisha-Khan Perry, Brown University, on land grabs, gender, and race in Africa and Latin America

Session 4b 5-6pm (breakouts)

- **“The Anthropocene”** (Kim Koo Library, 3rd floor north, Watson Institute)
 - This facilitated plenary discussion will continue the conversation about how this moment of human-generated climate change since the industrial revolution is different from other moments of climate change in humanity’s past. What lessons can be learned about the influence of climate disruption on particularly vulnerable groups? What kinds of shocks in terms of farming, food security, water access, mass migration, and the overload of existing resources should we expect, and what, if any, are the models of co-responsibility that can provide a narrative for how to move forward? (Graham Oliver, facilitator)

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6:30–7:30pm **Wrap-up session & remarks from Jo Guldi**
(Joukowsky Forum, 1st floor south, Watson Institute; overflow in
South Common Room, 2nd floor south, Watson Institute)

dinner off campus at participants' leisure

THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This conference was made possible through the generous support of The Watson Institute, The Humanities Initiative, the History Department, Spatial Structures in the Social Sciences (S4), The Taubman Center, and the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society (IBES).

We are grateful to the undergraduates who volunteered to help with registration: Sebastian Clark, Trevor Culhane, Merone Tadesse, Duncan Weinstein, Lance Gloss, Sylvia Brown, Camila Bustos, and Thomas Culver.

Personal thanks are due to Michael Murphy, Luke Smith, Vanessa Fabien, Leah VanWey, Graham Oliver, Hal Cook, Beshara Doumani, Caroline Karp, Robert Self, Rick Locke, John Logan, Jim Morone, Willow Brugh, Camilo Viveiros, Daniel Rodriguez, Dawn King, and Arthur Oliver, upon whose diligent labor, collaboration, encouragement, and wisdom this conference has very much depended.

Marga Kempner and Ellen White deserve special mention as the individuals who made possible virtually every aspect of the event and its smooth running. If you see them, please thank them in person!