

Interview with William Marks, author of *Water Voices From Around the World*

Today, Tyler R. Tichelaar of Reader Views is pleased to interview William E. Marks, who is here to talk about his new book “Water Voices from Around the World.”

William E. Marks is a water philosopher. In the early 1970s as a student at Fairleigh Dickinson University, he researched fish kills and industrial pollution and received the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s “Citizen Activist of the Year” award. Following college, he traveled Europe and Northwest Africa to study early industrial revolution and Old World water management practices. He then served as the Senior Environmental Analyst for the City of Newark in developing programs for storm water runoff and public water supply.

He resigned from Newark to undertake a 7,000 mile traversing horseback journey (Ride For Nature) across the United States to raise water consciousness while living outside for two years. He founded Martha’s Vineyard’s first state certified water testing laboratory, and Vineyard Environmental Research, Inst. He has traveled to over fifteen countries, and has received many environmental awards, and is the author or editor of numerous books, magazines, and poems. Most recently, William Marks has been featured in the award winning documentary, “FLOW: For Love Of Water.”

Today we will discuss his most recent project, “Water Voices from Around the World.”

Tyler: Thank you for joining me today, William. I understand you are the editor of “Water Voices from Around the World.” Will you tell us about the basic concept of the book and how it was put together?

William: The basic concept is to try and awaken and educate as many people as possible about our present water crisis and how we can work together to prevent a global collapse. Besides editing 77 authors and over 100 articles—I also wrote several special sections.

Tyler: Why water? Why devote an entire book to it?

William: Because this entire reality is a manifestation from water, including you and me and our thoughts. How we interact with water, and how we manage our water—has a direct impact on the entire living world.

With little doubt, “Water Voices” contains a wealth of information about water. In the past year I have received many emails giving thanks for this book because it “speaks” to all people—no matter their background or educational level. The information contained in this book is unique and up-to-date. It even provides an updated definition of our Earth’s water cycle as well as information about the mystery of water; healing; philosophy; religion; creation of our universe, and new information about the creation and evolution of life.

As you can understand, that is a lot of information to place between two covers.

Tyler: William, will you explain more what you mean by “this entire reality is a manifestation from water, including you and me and our thoughts”?

William: It is often said that we are all made from stardust. This is true. As well, we know that liquid water is necessary for the manifestation of life.

Chemical reactions producing clouds of water in space are a common occurrence. And, the existence of huge amounts of water in many regions of space was established as scientific fact about four years ago. As some of these gas clouds become denser due to gravity—they begin to heat up as they start to become stars such as our sun. As cosmic gasses heats up, they naturally expand. However, with the cooling presence of interstellar water—these clouds may become stars. Therefore, we see water providing a womblike presence to help give birth to stars.

Stars then create the heavier elements to form planets, and eventually a home to life. Thus, we see how this reality is a manifestation from water. And, since our brains are composed mostly of water, and since our brains are suspended in water inside our craniums—we see how our intelligence and thoughts are sourced from water.

Tyler: Will you tell us a little more about water’s importance in the creation of our intelligence, as you referenced above?

William: We really do not understand how the mind works. But, what we do know is that it is through our minds and senses that we perceive and interact with the world we are born into. Over time, we accumulate knowledge of the world around us, and pass this knowledge along to future generations. In this fashion, we believe ourselves to be “intelligent.” What is interesting to note, there are some theorists who believe that if there were no minds to perceive this reality—this reality would not be known to exist, and therefore would not exist. This is another way of saying that “reality is a state of mind.” Which is often found in ancient teachings of the East.

Tyler: What is the message you hope to get across to readers in this book?

William: By reaching out to writers from different regions around the globe—we hope to educate people about their regions, while also educating them about how other regions are managing their water resources. In fact, we have over the waters from over 50 countries represented in one form or another.

Tyler: Will you tell us the names of some of the book’s contributors and their viewpoints about water?

William: We were fortunate to have some of the world’s most renowned water scientists and researchers write for “Water Voices,” as well as people of the Earth. These writers include recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize as well as the Stockholm Water Prize—which is the Nobel Prize of water.

Names like, Kofi Annan; Mikhail Gorbachev; Larry Fahn (Pres.—Sierra Club); Vandana Shiva; Pete Seeger; Rajendra Singh; Malidoma Some; Glenn Estess (Pres.—Rotary Int.); Dr. Jane Goodall; Eilon Adar and Gedeon Dagan of Israel; Ryan Hreljac; Leonardo DiCaprio; Gilbert M. Grosvenor (Chair—National Geographic); Valli Moosa (Pres.—IUCN); Michael Read (Pres.—WEF); Ted Danson (of Oceana); Maude Barlow (Chair: Council of Canadians); Ryutaro Hashimoto (Fmr. Prime Min.—Japan); Ali Band Saad Al-Tokhais of Saudi Arabia; Irena Salina (Director of FLOW); and many people close to the Earth—such as shamans in the desert of Liberia; Jebra Muchahary (Pres.—Indian Confederation of Indigenous People), and Chief Jake Swamp—who is renowned for planting “Trees of Peace” around the world.

The list of profound contributors to “Water Voices” is too long to express for this interview—but people can visit our website and review the biographies of all 77 writers.

Tyler: Have you found disagreement about water among different groups of people; don’t we all agree it’s vital to our environment?

William: Yes, as relationships go—there will always be differences when dealing with the life and death resource of water. However, we have some stellar examples, especially in the Middle East, where water-sharing agreements and treaties were successfully negotiated.

Tyler: What sorts of laws should be enacted to protect water, and how useful are they?

William: We have many laws on the books in this country as well as others, and we also have international laws and treaties. In the US we have federal laws such as the 1899 Refuse Act, the 1972 Federal Water Pollution Control Act the Clean Water Act and the Wetlands Protection Act. Then we have a myriad of overlapping regulatory

agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers; Coastal Zone Management; the United States Environmental Protection Agency, etc.

Yes, we can always pass another law when there is a water catastrophe or gross insult of some sort—but the end result is that these laws have minimal enforcement.

Many of the articles in “Water Voices” addresses this issue—and the alternatives we offer hope to empower people to change their lifestyle as part of a new shift in human behavior on a grand scale.

Tyler: William, where I live there is a great deal of controversy about sulfide mining near Lake Superior, the world’s largest freshwater lake. The argument is that it will provide jobs in a difficult economy, but isn’t the surety of our water supply more important? Do the authors of “Water Voices Around the World” take positions on such matters?

William: The question should be: Do we need the sulfide and the jobs more than we need freshwater for our survival? I believe questions such as this will be a part of the coming water awakening. Water is priceless to our health, the survival of global ecosystems, and the survival of our children.

Tyler: William, “Water Voices from Around the World” is also a coffee table type book with four hundred photographs. Will you tell us about the photographs and why they were important for inclusion in the book?

William: The 400 photographs published in “Water Voices” were taken by over 100 photographers at locations around the globe. Water is photogenic. Photos of water also trigger memories and emotional responses—whether from our own lifetime or from our innate knowledge of water.

We also paid extra attention to the captions that accompanied the photographs. The way the book is designed—a person can gain much information by just looking at the beautiful photographs and reading the captions.

Tyler: Will you give us an example of something people in the United States might learn from reading the book that they wouldn’t realize otherwise about water in different parts of the world?

William: Out of the many examples, the one I will share is the story of water and Notre Dame in Paris. Over 6,500 years ago, the area of Notre Dame had many natural springs that were considered sacred, and therefore served as gathering places for worship by local tribes. Eventually, the Romans built a temple there, then the Christians built a church that became the site for Notre Dame. In this fashion, we see the sacredness of Notre Dame’s location flowing from ancient affiliations with water. This sacred location is also where we have Paris’s “Point Zero,” which is the location that all points of Paris are measured.

I imagine that even modern Parisians have little idea that their entire city is centered around an ancient site that was founded upon sacred waters. In fact, almost all of the ancient holy sights around the world today were founded upon sacred locations of water established by our distant ancestors. For instance, the holy city of Jerusalem was founded at its present location due to worship at an ancient underground spring. All the institutionalized religions we find in Jerusalem today share the common denominator of similar water rituals from the early people of the area.

Tyler: William, I understand the book has already had quite a reception, including some awards. Will you tell us a little bit about the feedback you’re receiving for “Water Voices Around the World”?

William: Yes, many water savvy individuals, as well as people at universities, the United Nations, and those with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), have ordered this book.

As well, “Water Voices” won the First Place Gold Award at the world’s largest international book competition. This award was for the book “Most Likely to Save the Planet.” This was a huge honor, and, as you can understand—there were many environmental books, not just water books, competing for this award.

Tyler: I understand the United Nations water effort that brought the book about began with the President of Tajikistan. Will you tell us more about him and why water is a great concern to him?

William: Yes, the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, is very water conscious. His country is situated in the mountains of South Central Asia, and has about 60% of that region’s waters flowing from its snow and ice melt. In 2003, Tajikistan proposed and sponsored the International Year of Freshwater, and received considerable respect at the UN for such a bold initiative.

“Water Voices from Around The World” was published in consideration and support of Tajikistan’s UN water initiative entitled the “International Decade of Action ‘Water for Life’, 2005-2015.” While creating this book we worked closely with Tajikistan’s UN Ambassador Rashid Alimov and his advisor, Lyudmila Lapshina.

Tyler: What was the purpose of the UN Water initiative and is it reaching its goal?

William: The purpose of the UN Water initiative is to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015, and to stop unsustainable exploitation of water resources. As far as reaching this goal is concerned, it is my opinion that the UN will not be successful. I feel it is a commendable effort—but given today’s economic stresses, population growth, and natural resource shortages—it is a goal that will remain elusive.

Tyler: You mentioned earlier how people need to be educated about water and its use. What can the individual do to ensure water remains unpolluted and valued?

William: In a few words: live as simply as you possibly can.

Tyler: William, if readers only remember one new thing about water after reading “Water Voices from Around the World,” what do you hope that will be?

William: That the next step in our evolution will be to adopt a new water philosophy—a philosophy whereby we work as co-creators with water to help restore life on Earth. We cannot create life—but we can work with water’s creative energies to help restore abundant life to our planet.

Tyler: Thank you for joining me today, William. Before we go, will you tell us about your website and what additional information may be found there about “Water Voices from Around the World”?

William: People who visit www.watervoices.com will be able to read many free articles from the book, and read all the biographies of the contributing authors with information as to how to contact them. Our website also displays a sampling of the beautiful photographs published in the book.

The website also contains a Blog and links for emailing comments and for contacting us with any questions. We see “Water Voices” as being part of the present water awakening, and as a vehicle for helping to connect people to an ever-growing water family.

Tyler: Thank you, William, for the informative interview about our greatest natural resource. I wish you much luck with “Water Voices from Around the World.”

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