

# DIMINISHING WATER SEEN AS A HUMAN RIGHT

**W**hile Oregon's drippy March has us all feeling a little soggy, water isn't as widely available as it seems.

A panel at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference at the University of Oregon earlier this month explored the privatization of water and how it has limited accessibility to this vital resource.

Panelist Justin Woods, an adjunct professor of public administration at Pace University in New York, said that water is a human right. He pointed out that the privatization of water is a growing trend, and it poses a problem for low-income families. Woods used the example of Detroit, which

is considering privatizing its water. Because of poor management on the part of Detroit, families had their water shut off if they couldn't pay their water bill on time.

"In poor urban areas like in Detroit, massive water shut-offs happen because of disinvestment and extreme poverty as a result of our economic system, and now we are shutting off water to people who need it for life," Woods said.

In the U.S., water is defined as an usufruct, meaning that as U.S. citizens we have the right to use water instead of owning it as a property right. Woods explained that water is classified in the U.S. as a public good, but each state can choose to abide by this principle or stray from it.

**'We have to figure out a new way to restructure how we think about water, not as a private property right, but as a public resource that we can own and manage in benefit for the public.'**

— JUSTIN WOODS, PACE UNIVERSITY

"Our resource is overused and inequitably distributed based on availability in terms of geographic location, access to infrastructure, personal and community economics, and then our legal infrastructure in water rights," Woods said.

He argued that because water is a public good, it should "be managed as a resource for public benefit." This is not always the case in the U.S., Woods pointed out. One problem, he said, is that we are consuming more water than is recharged.

To solve these water rights issues, Woods said, "We have to figure out a new way to restructure how we think about water, not as a private property right, but as a public resource that we can own and manage in benefit for the public." ■

**Make your home work for you.**



You've worked hard for your home. Now let it work for you with a **SELCO Home Equity Line of Credit**. Turn your home's equity into the patio you've always wanted—or deck, or kitchen, or bathroom ...

**%** With rates as low as **2.99% APR\***, now's a great time.

**🖱️** Our online application makes it quick and easy.

**GO!** Tap your funds whenever you need them.

Apply today! To get started, stop by any branch, call **800-445-4483**, or visit [selco.org/HomeEquityLoans](http://selco.org/HomeEquityLoans).



*Live a Good Life.*



\*Rate depends on qualification and approval. Terms and conditions apply. See SELCO for details.

Banking | Mortgages | Insurance | Retirement | Business Lending

**ALL CLASSES BY DONATION**

VINYASA RESTORATIVE  
GENTLE ZEN KIDS

ॐ

**YOGA TEACHER TRAININGS**

- Costa Rica 21 Day Immersions
- Eugene 7 Weekend Intensives

[everydaypeopleyoga.com](http://everydaypeopleyoga.com)

352 W. 12th Ave. 541. 513. 0180

**Hop on over to Euphoria!**

**EUPHORIA CHOCOLATE COMPANY**

<b>Downtown</b> 946 Willamette 458-201-8750	<b>Willamette &amp; 17</b> 6 W. Willamette 541-343-9223	<b>Oakway Center</b> 21 Oakway Center 541-343-0407	<b>Factory Store</b> 4090 Bertelsen 541-344-4605
---	---	--	--

[www.euphoriachocolate.com](http://www.euphoriachocolate.com)