

Questions for the Grassroots Solutions to Corporate Power  
Saving The Environment From Corporate Destruction  
The Commons

**1. How does the invisible hand threaten the environment?**

Does not consider the biosphere's carrying capacity  
Leads to climate disaster,  
depleted resources: wood, fish, water  
Best possible adjustment to an ever worsening situation

**2. What is the difference between the natural commons and the cultural commons?**

Inherited from: life, nature, air, water soil, rivers forests etc., climate, ecology  
Inherited from our ancestors, inventions, science, intellectual contributions,  
monetary system  
The Cultural Commons,  
creations of humankind,  
should belong to all human beings  
governed by true democratic process  
with checks to assure protection of the rights of the Natural Commons.

**3. Does it make sense to have patents on life?**

Vandana Shiva  
Can you really own life?  
Isn't that slavery?  
The secret to life is one of the unknown mysteries, how can someone own it?  
US steamrolled the world to accept this crazy idea  
Biopiracy is a crime against indigenous knowledge, poor people & nature.

**4. What are Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights and why are they important?**

TRIPs Uruguay Round of WTO 1994  
just before WTO  
Private control over the creative process  
Put patents & copyrights in the trade agreements  
requires WTO members to provide copyright rights,  
covering content producers; industrial designs; i  
; patents; new plant varieties; trademarks;

**5. How is our public domain being privatized?**

Bill Willers  
Wise Use movement  
Free market environmentalism  
Supported by Foundations Olin, Scaife etc.

Changing from public ownership to private customers.

Charter Forests, local interests?

Iron Rangers

Naming Rights to the National Parks

## **6. What is common and what is private property?**

Is publicly owned lands the Commons

Is the Russian River the Commons

How about the water that comes from the Eel River

Is our Monetary system part of the commons

Is our climate system part of the commons

## **7. Should market mechanisms be used to protect the commons?**

Market will not protect the commons

Commons are a non market phenomena

## **8. What is Ecological Economics?**

Herman Daly

Since human existence operates within the milieu of the environmental commons, economics has to take the environmental commons into account.

They are figuring out how we can exist sustainably within our biosphere

True Cost Accounting

## **9. How does the Constitution deal with nature?**

property

Environmental laws under the Commerce Clause

## **10. How did the Romans consider nature?**

3 types of property, private property, public property & common property

Extra patrimonium incapable of being possessed

## **11. Should nature have rights?**

Nature should not be property

should have inalienable rights of its own

CELDF

Ecuador, Bolivia, Uruguay

## **12. How should the natural commons be defined?**

Natural commons are beyond ownership

creations of nature,

should be seen as interconnected systems on which all life depends

deserving of rights in the constitution, standing in court, and legal recognition

in their own right—not as the extension of human property rights.

**13. How does corporate money control public policy over the commons?**

Conservative Foundations & Corporate Donors support

Conservative Think Tanks

Pro Privatization natural & cultural commons

TISA privatizing public services

**14. How is our water supply threatened by corporate actions?**

Bottled water companies are instilling the notion that water is a commodity

Agribusiness

Gualala & Albion River fights

**15. How can communities protect their water supplies?**

AfD Defending water for Life

Community Rights Ordinances

Do not have to deal with regulatory structure

Barnstead, NewHamshire

**16. What are the problems with the bottled water industry?**

Commodifying water

Taking public water for private gain

Stored in toxic plastic bottles

**17. What is critical about the cross-partisan support of community rights initiatives?**

Broad support

People protect their community

Republicans in Pennsylvania

**18. What is meant by “Public Trust”?**

certain natural resources like water or air

belong to all

cannot be privately owned or controlled

because of their overwhelming importance

to each individual and society as a whole.

**19. How do trade agreements impact the water commons?**

General Agreement on Trade & services GATS

Regulations of private water & Sewage systems

Burdensome, not relevant, unreasonable

## **20. Do public water systems work well?**

A lot of private water systems going broke - Albion, Camp Meeker  
Stockton selling its water system  
Public-public partnerships  
Better than public/private

## **21. How do acequias work?**

Milago - Beanfield War  
Communally run irrigation systems  
From Spanish heritage

## **22. How does agribusiness impact the water supply?**

Pollution of the water supply  
Selling cheap ag water to rich cities

## **23. Do we have a right to water?**

Uruguay  
Right to water  
Social considerations over economic considerations  
Private companies banned from supplying public water for human consumption  
Bolivia  
Cochabamba  
Public water  
Regulate cumulative impacts  
Right to water

## **24. Should Water be a commodity?**

Gift of nature or property  
Water is a fundamental right.  
It should not be available just to the rich?  
Water split into many subcategories  
Power, resource, Grace

## **25. Is green washing good?**

No - just a PR trick to get you to buy their product  
Starbucks - Biota  
Commoditization, transportation, plastics, difficult to compost