

Water-First Philosophy

Vision: Embrace a water-first approach to planning human interventions in the environment.

Blue Ecology is an ecological philosophy, which emerged from interweaving First Nations and Western thought, that acknowledges water's (i.e. fresh and salt) essential rhythmical life-spirit and central functional role in generating, sustaining, receiving and ultimately unifying life on Earth Mother.

Key concepts

- Sustainability is about *survival with dignity*, rather than progressive development;
- There is no differentiation between fresh and salt water, they are both important and linked;
- Water is a living organism with a spirit;
- Water is always moving and connecting
- Water cannot be owned, and in the fluid form is heavy to transport;
- Healthy water meanders in its course; and
- Blue Ecology provides a focus -- *a good place to start* to solve complex ecosystem topologies.

Blue Ecology Principles

“We are borrowing water from future generations” (Olivia Sam, youth)

The intent of the Blue Ecology vision is to give priority to water, over human's financial interests. The highest sustainability test is water-first: planned development (e.g. real estate, urban planning, forestry, agriculture, mining, oil and gas extraction) cannot impede the functional delivery of quality water to ecosystems in a healthy rhythm.

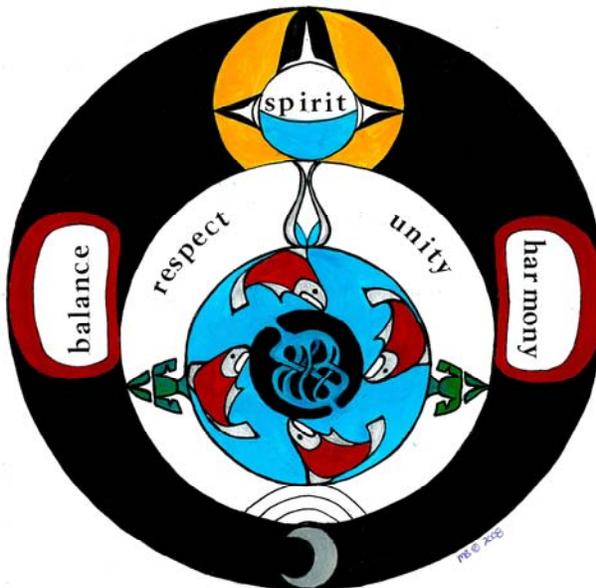
The five principles of Blue ecology are:

- Spirit:** water, fresh and salt, is a living spirit.
- Harmony:** harmonious sustainability in a functional rhythm engenders healthy bodies and ecosystems.
- Respect:** water through ceremony, education and giving back, else Earth Mother will retaliate by taking water away.
- Unity:** water has the ability to connect and unify humans because of our common reliance on this basic unit of existence. It is a proto-interest.
- Balance:** restrained and measured water withdrawals in combination with and giving back (i.e. restoration, monitoring, or ceremony) to watersheds and water.

Blue Ecology Water Cycle

Four Worlds of the Blue Ecology Water Cycle

- a) Sky world (i.e. spirit world): The model highlights the rhythmical role of the sun and moon, and how water is a gift from the spirit world (e.g. Creator, God etc). Balance and harmony are achieved, through respect, recognition of water's spirit and giving back, as well as by the understanding that all four worlds are connected by water.
- b) Earth Mother: All beings on earth are connected to each other by the transitory element, water. Our human health is directly dependant upon the health of the waters that flow through our land and bodies. If the water is sick, so too are we.
- c) Water world: Water has a spirit. Water is always moving and connecting in rhythms. Fish are part of the water, as all aquatic life is, the two are one.
- d) Under world: Water, the lifeblood, seeps, trickles and connects underground, like capillaries under human skin. Water is purified here.¹



Blue Ecology Water Cycle is meant to be an intuitive companion to Western Science's analytical hydrologic cycle

Best Practices

Ask first, how is water affected by this current or planned human intervention?

1. Recognize that access to water is a universal and basic human right;
2. Communicate and prominently display the Blue Ecology vision and principles
3. Develop and monitor measurable indicators to audit the implementation of Blue Ecology principles and practices. Invest in real time water quality and quantity measurement systems;
4. Embrace the principle of subsidiarity when designing implementation plans: local people, especially the youth, have a strong interest, as caretakers, in the water that flows through their lives, and so they should be involved in water management at the smallest effective watershed management unit;
5. Mentor and train local caretakers in the Blue Ecology approach to work together among and across watersheds, states and countries;
6. Water cannot be owned, source-to-tap delivery is a state expense and responsibility and;
7. Celebrate water in architectural design, urban planning, artistic installations, community and nature parks, and forest visual landscapes, to remind the public of its importance.

For more information see www.blueecology.com

A good example of a hydrologic cycle: <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/watercycle.html>