

# *Let's Schmooze*

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## **Water - the Blood of Life for All Living Things**

We all know what blood is ~ a liquid that constantly circulates throughout a body, bringing life-giving nutrients to all parts of that same body. In human bodies, it's a red liquid that circulates so thoroughly and quickly that every single living cell in our bodies gets a constant supply of fresh oxygenated blood, together with other essential life-or-death nutrients.

Now ~ when you think of it, our global biosphere has a blood of its own, too ~ a liquid that continually circulates throughout our biosphere, touching in some way all forms of life on Earth ~ and in the process bringing life-giving nutrients to all the living species that call Earth home. You know what that liquid is ~ water! Without water constantly circulating throughout our biosphere, our planet would look like Mars ~ devoid of meaningful life. Mars is a dead dust bowl ~ just as our own human bodies turn to dust when all water is removed.

With large chunks of our world facing looming cycles of mega-droughts and mega-floods, planners are focusing more and more attention on preserving clean, drinking water for all of us. Yet, the challenges abound.

In our thirst for cheap energy sources, a new extraction industry has popped up, termed fracturing. Hydraulic fracturing for natural gas pockets locked deep underground has introduced numerous poisonous toxins into both our ground waters and surface waters. That, in turn, has increased the risk of pregnant mothers having premature births, and caused an increase in hospitalizations for those folks living in areas close to the fracturing wells. With both ground and surface waters compromised with fracturing toxins, our access to clean drinking water is increasingly threatened.

Unfortunately, there's more. In its own way, the long-term health of all our oceans is also threatened.

It's an important issue. Oceans cover more than two-thirds of the surface of our planet, and they affect every part of every landmass on Earth. What happens in our oceans impacts all land-dwelling species, no matter how far that species may dwell from the oceans.

The problems are multi-fold. Climate warming is raising sea levels, and these rising sea levels threaten to swamp coastal cities around the world, affecting billions of people. Climate warming, together with the increased acidification of oceanic waters, is proving detrimental to fish stocks, and threatening to decimate the krill populations, a huge food source low on the food chain, but yet critical to all the other life forms in the ocean higher up on the food chain ~ and we humans just love to eat those tasty fish higher on the oceanic food chain! The warming waters are also allowing pockets of methane gas to escape from the ocean floors; methane gas happens to be highly toxic to organic life forms as we know them.

The latest alarming news ~ (1) sun screen products now appear to be harmful to oceanic coral reefs, a critical component of overall ocean health, (2) plastic debris is overwhelming our oceans, and (3) the oxygen levels in the ocean are declining ~ a serious threat to all life in the oceans.

Whether fresh or salt, water on Earth is far more than "precious" ~ it is absolutely essential to life on our planet. We need to take good care of all our water supplies ~ the blood of life itself as we know it. With the human population spiraling past seven billion, there is growing pressure on both clean, drinking-quality water, and on salt waters, even as the oceanic fish farms boom.

Conservation is key. Good stewardship is paramount. With intelligent conservation and excellent stewardship, we may be able to avoid "water wars" on land and in the oceans. Let's be good stewards of our biosphere's "blood of life." Let's not waste it ~ and let's keep it refreshingly clean, and free from all impurities and poisonous toxins.

~ *'til we meet again* ~