



## ***Teacher's Guide***

### **The Great Lakes: Who Owns the Water?** **Planet H<sub>2</sub>O**

#### **Grade Levels:**

Intermediate  
Junior High

#### **Subject Areas:**

Environmental Education  
Social Studies

#### **Synopsis:**

Teens discover the facts about Great Lakes water and learn with dismay that the water of the lakes may become a commodity to be sold to the highest bidder. Meanwhile, the Wisconsin town of Waukesha believes it has a right to Great Lakes water because the community is located only 20 miles from Lake Michigan. In discussions with Great Lakes activists, scientists, and global water-rights advocates, the teens begin to understand the challenges of getting access to fresh water and of making decisions that will be fair to others, yet preserve the world's freshwater supplies. They agree to learn more about a problem that may make water more valuable than oil in the very near future.

#### **Learning Objectives:** Students will:

- Understand that we are all responsible for maintaining water quality.
- Understand that the worldwide scarcity of freshwater supplies is quickly becoming an overwhelming issue for the global community.
- Appreciate the need to conserve water.
- Understand the need to take a stand on the issue of freshwater supplies.

#### **Vocabulary:**

Commodifying, commodity, emotionally-charged issue, divert, watershed, aquifer, ground water

#### **Pre-Viewing Discussion:**

What is the largest source of fresh water on the North American continent?

Has this water ever been polluted? What was done to clean up the water?

What areas of North America need to find new sources for fresh water?

What other countries or regions of the world are short of freshwater supplies?

**Post-Viewing Discussion:**

Why did the young environmentalist feel that Great Lakes water might be depleted in the future?

What was the opinion of the specialist who serves on global committees considering worldwide problems of freshwater supplies?

Do you believe that Great Lakes water should be sold? Why or why not?

Do you believe that the Great Lakes states have an obligation to provide fresh water to drier states?

**Further Activities:**

Find out if access to fresh water is a problem in the Middle East.

Find out if people in Southern cities such as Phoenix, Tucson, or El Paso have restrictions on watering gardens or other landscaped areas.

Investigate the use of xeriscape landscaping in the Southwest. What is xeriscape landscaping? Is its use controlled by government regulation?

Investigate the problem of sources of water for Florida orange groves.

**Related New Dimension Media Titles:**

Water Environment (series)

Water as a Solvent

Water and Life on Earth

Latin America: Thirsty Cities (series)

A Drop of Water