



Understanding the presence of the commons in our world makes it possible to imagine social change taking place in new ways. We rise together to claim our inheritance – of nature, culture and community. In so doing, we recognize our responsibility to safeguard this inheritance for future generations. Here in Minnesota, at the headwaters of the Mississippi, the opportunity for leadership in re-defining our relationship to water is ripe and critical. How we share our water today with those who live downstream has ripple effects around the globe.

On the Commons began collaboration with In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre in the summer of 2006. We see involvement with Invigorate the Common Well as a unique opportunity to better understand how to create vehicles for making the commons tangible, concrete and visible to the general public.

In our collaboration with In the Heart of the Beast, On the Commons celebrates the role of art and culture in making the commons tangible, concrete and visible. We thank In the Heart of the Beast for the privilege of working together to bring public attention to water as a commons. Across the country On the Commons encourages deeper public knowledge and interest in the significance of the commons in all of our lives.

Rachel Breen, On the Commons

Background Information: The Water Commons

Water is essential for life on earth. Water is a commons, the trust of all humanity. Water is precious and sustains all life on earth. The right to water, like the air we breathe, is an inalienable, individual and collective right for all species. Each member of the human community has the right to water in quantity and quality sufficient to life and basic economic activities. **Water belongs to the Earth and all species and, therefore, must not be treated as a private commodity to be bought, sold and traded for profit.**

The intrinsic value of the Earth's water precedes its utility and commercial value and therefore must be respected and safeguarded by all political, commercial and social institutions. Creating the conditions necessary to ensure access to water for the vital needs of every person and every community is an obligation of society as a whole and the collective responsibility of citizens of the world.

The global water supply is a shared legacy, a public trust, a fundamental human right, and, consequently, a collective responsibility. Only by recognizing these principles at local, national and international levels can the commons be adequately protected.

To find out more about the commons visit our website:

onthecommons.org