

Chronicles of Diversity



A Map of Washington Territory

Metis Economics: Water

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When your organization has a water title, it might be assumed that you know something about water. Actually the title originated as I was reading some warm fuzzy stuff. Reading along, the author mentioned "and wonder springs" into something great.

Cool! Actually "Cool, clear, water," as the old song from the "Sons of the Pioneers" recounted:

All day I face a barren waste

Without the taste of water

Cool water [water] (water) [water]

Old Dan and I, with throats burned dry

An' souls that cry for water [water] (water)

Cool [water]

Clear [water]

Water [water] (water)

Sounds like most people's job doesn't it? I think I need a trip to the water cooler. Much better! Water don't get any gooder than this. Seattle's finest, from the high Cascade Mountains, run through a two stage filter to rid it of the swampy taste, and stored in a flint glass carboy on a refrigerated cooler. Man, is that a good drink. My glass is already half full, or is it half empty? I never can remember the right politically correct response. Truthfully, it probably relates to the type of day your having, not your metaphysics.

Personally, I've always believed that it is much more important what you put in the glass than any discussion related to the potential volumetric measurement.

In case you haven't heard, Wonder Springs, as in water, actually exists, in Death Valley, California. Throughout the country there are a number of Wonder Spring, but only one Wonder Springs that my research has turned up. Also only two Wonder Springs, as organizations, both which we control. A

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recent yahoo search, and we showed up number three on the list. Not bad for never submitting it to any search engines or developing the site. We're not on the first page of the Google, however.

I am in the process of reading a book, "The Secret Knowledge of Water," by Craig Childs. The subtitle states: There are two easy ways to die in the desert: thirst and drowning. Contrary to popular opinion, the author seems to hold the premise, that if you know what your doing neither form of dying ranks very high on the probability list. But venturing into the desert wilderness without knowing where to look for water, or how to avoid flash floods, is a formula for disaster and death.

Water is something that most Americans take for granted. You turn on the tap, or the sprinkler and it is supposed to flow. For the most part, that water is pretty good stuff too. But as many things we take for granted, we tend to depreciate its value. But underlying this peace and tranquility is a complex infrastructure that most urban dwellers do not even begin to understand. I suppose this is a good thing. It's a jungle out there, and you really don't want to be stressed about one thing that has always been considered secure.

I do find it interesting that people pay more money for bottled water without complaint, than they do for gasoline. Turn it brown with some ground roasted beans, put in some chocolate, milk, caffeine and a number of other ingredients and you have the basis for much of Seattle's reputation.

There are regions of the world however, where it costs more than gasoline to turn any water into a drinkable form. Also in much of the world those brown turning ingredients are there to cover up the underlying taste, not to make you fat.

The main reason that the American west exists as the great fly over, drive through, and red counties is however, the limited availability of water. As we experience climate change and we mine out our ground water aquifers, water will become an asset with much more strategic value.

Eastern Washington is part of that landscape. The Grand Coulee Dam turned our small portion of the Great American Desert into the Columbia Basin project. Not only did it provide cheap irrigation water to the central part of the state, it also gave us cheap hydroelectric power.

That area, as well as most of the entire Columbia River drainage, was historically shaped by floods beyond our comprehension. I call it the land of the Phylogenesis people, the Swept Aways. These vast floods, as Lake Missoula drained after the last ice age, occurred many times, sweeping away and redepositing vast (as an understatement) quantities of rock, sand, and soil. Anyone living in the path of these floods would have been swept away into the salts of the Pacific Ocean. Those who live there today understand, at least in the psyche, that this was an awesome happening, and you are not God.

But even though the great Columbia still flows and her waters irrigate a vast acreage, in this land, water resources and rights are now over-allocated in their demands. There is not enough water to go around in years of drought.

As I have traveled around looking for a place to move, I always look more at the water rights than many of the more apparent assets. Many of the real estate agents, have the attitude that as long as the sun rises and the rivers flow, you will always be able to get all the water you want cheaply.

After my operation, the renters left my mother's rental property in the town of Reardan. The mess was overwhelming. It turned out to be 3600 pounds of garbage, probably a half a dozen old major appliances, 56 tires, and a few old automobile engines and other recyclables.

I thought it would be nice to see if I could find a cheap place nearby to live, while I fixed up my mother's place and then rent both out later. A real estate agent Spokane gave me a lead on a foreclosure a few miles out of town near the mouth of Spring Creek Canyon.

This ten acre parcel had been turned into a horse desert, but there was a relatively new mobile home that with a coat of paint would be quite nice. The well was an eight inch pipe, as compared to the usual six inch. A nice large shed, the place had possibilities. I did think it unusual however, that someone had pulled the pump from the well. Now well pumps and wire can be somewhat expensive, but once installed are not something you remove as a quick visit to Midnight Auto. It would be a few hour task. Wonder Springs, why is the pump missing?

Back into Spokane with computer access to the Department of Ecology's well logs, I found that there was only one eight inch pipe in the area, and the description looked like the same place. The well log was quite interesting however, stating that the well was a dry hole. Not only that, the drilling record would make you believe that there wasn't any water there either. The geology wasn't right for a real ground water well. I couldn't believe someone would put that kind of money into a place with no water, but that would surely explain why it was a cheap foreclosure.

So I went back out to the place to take another look, to see if there was another well on the acreage. When I got there I parked near the well house and set my GPS on the hood of my truck while I went to investigate further. When I returned I found the readings on my GPS corresponded with the well location on the well log, well within the margin of error, and I didn't find any other well. I then called the real estate agent and told her I wasn't interested. Driving by recently someone is now living in the place. Wonder Springs, what they are doing for water?

As you enter the Colville River valley just south of Chewelah, there is what remains of an old homestead up on the hillside. Forty acres with a million dollar view. Part of the house still includes this early home. A nice barn and sheds, this with a new house and some cabins would make a great retreat center. Water, there were two spring houses with an estimated flow of 300 gallons per minute. Cool, clear, water. Real Wonder Springs?

When we returned to the real estate office, I asked the agent for a copy of the water documentation. He brought me copies of two Water Claims, that said sure enough 300 gallons per minute, filed according to state law in 1960 something, documenting the surface water usage back for another 70 years of so.

Not being familiar with a Water Claim, as opposed to a Water Right, I again returned to Spokane to do some research. Water Claims in Washington were established in the 1960's to document preexisting water usages, as in this case. However, they were to be followed up with a further application for a Water Right. Without ever completing the Water Right application and obtaining the said Water Right, the papers are worthless, unless you like to frame old worthless documents to hang on your wall.

But to make it even more interesting, because of over allocation of existing surface water, and the Colville River being part of the Columbia River system, which now must allocate some water for migratory fish, the whole drainage basin is closed to even accepting surface Water Right applications. That does not mean granting surface water rights, that means even accepting the application.

Curious, I went in and talked to a Department of Ecology water rights person. While not mentioning the property specifically I ask about getting legal water on such a place. I was told the only way would be to drill a domestic well. A domestic well in Washington is an exempt

Water Right which limits ground water withdrawal to less than 5000 gallons per day, for domestic consumption only, watering stock, and irrigating a one half acre garden. As far as any commercial well, chances were similar to the surface water right. "You want to do what?" Followed by uncontrolled laughter.

When I called the real estate person and told him the specifics of why I wasn't interested, he didn't seem to be at all interested. Could it be that a sucker can walk through the door at any minute? That place again has sold, and someone has closed the gate with a sign stating trespassers will be shot. Wonder Springs what might happen if the state should ever decide to question where this place gets its water?

Those are just a couple of stories of water in Washington, the Evergreen State. When you move to the short grass prairies of Montana or the deserts of the Southwest, the limiting factor of water may become more accentuated. However, people have lived and prospered in all those areas for thousands of years.

The third opening of the west, which is the focus of our *Metis Economics* says that this prosperity they found, is not the prosperity of the Blue counties, but peace that lives within the security of Natural Law and Common Grace. Regardless of lines on a map and surveyors monuments on the ground, ultimately the land still belongs to God, and he takes care of the deer, and the ground squirrels, and the turkeys. It may be a harder way to live than within the confines of the city, but it does provide the substance for which the spirit of man seeks.

The very nature of man however, seeks to find God the way man understands. The wisdom of metis says God does allow that to happen, according to His will. But the bigger picture is that man was created for kinship with God. When the best the church can teach is a relationship with Jesus, perhaps it needs to change its theology to focus upon the true gospel which is kinship with the Creator. Legal adoption is what the specific revelation of the Bible teaches.

It is a humbling experience to know that God must provide water to fill your canteen for the next leg of your journey. It's not quite the same to turn on the tap and know you must filter out the impurities. Could it be that the rise of bottled water sales, is just a way that urban people try to fill their hunger for sipping water from a pure free flowing mountain stream? Bottled Alpine spring water is available at the nearest store and vending machines everywhere.

The spirit of man questions what wonder springs from God's mighty creation? The answer is love, grace, and truth, you shall never find only looking at the knowledge of man. It must be gained by wisdom obtained from God. All you have to do is to look at the art He has created for us to live within and say, "Let me understand the wonder springs of your eternal home." And then the Wonder Springs!

Other articles in this Phylogenesis Series:

Liquidity with purpose; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/liquidty9-29-4.pdf>

Bottled Liquidity; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/bottleliquid10-6-4.pdf>

Fakin it; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/fakinit10-13-4.pdf>

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Political Energetics; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/poleenergy10-27-4.pdf>

Reasoned Phylongeny; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/reasonphylodg11-3-4.pdf>

Sasquatches & Polar Bears; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/sasbears11-10-4.pdf>

51-48 gas; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/51-48gas11-17-4.pdf>

Show me; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/showme11-24-4.pdf>

A cheap plot; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/acheapplot12-1-4.pdf>

Cheesy Cows; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/chessycows12-8-4.pdf>

Raurbs versus Apgars; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/raurbsapgars12-15-4.pdf>

Metis; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metis12-29-4.pdf>

The Complete (Natural) Metis; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/completemetis1-5-5.pdf>

Metis Economics; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metisecon1-12-5.pdf>

Metis Economics, People; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metispeople1-19-5.pdf>

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