



The Great Water Grab

A Special Report On The Privatizing of A Natural Public Resource

Our Water Is Being Stolen From Us!

The Rich Are Buying Up The Rights For Our Water, To \$ell It Back To Us

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Unbeknown to most Americans, their most precious natural resource, as in life-giving drinking water, is being stolen, literally right out from under them. If they ever want a drink, they'll have to buy it back, at a considerable price.

A recent episode of the hit TruTV investigative program, "Conspiracy Theory With Jesse Ventura," has literally tapped into a water scandal that most of the US public has no idea about. Multi-national corporations and unscrupulous wealthy individuals are buying up water rights for some of the largest aquifers in the US and the world. With water predicted to become a scarcity within 20 years, it would appear that some of the elite wealthy are trying to corner the market on the earth's most precious life-giving resource, water.

American oil-tycoon T. Boone Pickens was one of the first to rush to capitalize on the impending water shortage, investing a meager \$100-million in a scheme that he readily admits will make him an easy billion dollars, if not far more.

In the Texas panhandle, Roberts County sits over the largest underground aquifer in the US, the Ogallala Aquifer, containing a quadrillion gallons of water. This vast underground reservoir reaches as far north as South Dakota. Roberts county is roughly 924 square miles, yet has only a meager 900 residents. Some people would say they were "ripe for the picking." Perhaps that statement should read, "ripe for Pickens."

Mr. Pickens has purchased 68,000 acres, as well as the right to drain up to 50% of the Ogallala aquifer to sell for his own personal profit. Needless to say, that isn't exactly going over too well for many Texas residents.



T. Boone Pickens 68,000 acres that sit over the Ogallala aquifer. (Graphics: TruTV)

The fact that something like this is even allowed tells you that government doesn't always work in our best interests, especially when big money is there to buy off the legislators, something Pickens knows a thing or two about.

Money Buys (Bribes) Legislation

Thanks to many state legislators whose campaigns he helped finance, Pickens has been bestowed with a tremendous power generally reserved for state and local governments, the power of "eminent domain." He did this by creating a Fresh Water Supply District—a government entity that is allowed that kind of power.

Pickens accomplished this feat after legislators passed a bill that made it all the easier to create a water district. Previously, a district's five elected supervisors needed to be registered voters living within the boundaries of the district. Now, they only had to own land in the district; they could live and vote wherever. The bill was allegedly a "coincidental" bill put forth by two legislators from Houston. If you can believe the Pickens camp, they say that Mesa had nothing to do with influencing the bills passing. That seems improbable to many, considering the stakes.

What Pickens did do was to create an eight-acre town and a local government, one where two of his employees are the only eligible voters. Once he had organized that, he held an election in which both of his employee voters cast their exclusive votes to make their tiny municipality into a powerful Fresh-Water Supply District. As a direct result of this scheming, Pickens is now able to issue tax-free bonds on his own, giving him the lucrative benefit of borrowing at a tremendous discount.

The only problem now for Picket was that he was far away from any municipalities that might have a potential need to buy water. So Picket has proposed a massive pipeline that would be built in a 250-foot-wide corridor, all the way to Dallas. To get the pipeline, Pickett needed the Texas legislature to give him a joint energy and water transmission lines right-of-way.

After spending \$1.2-billion to help elect Texas legislators in 2006, Pickens was able to get the law changed. He did so with the invaluable help from former state Senator J.E. Buster Brown, now one of the most influential and powerful lobbyists in Texas. Brown accomplished this through an amendment to a major piece of state water legislation. The amendment, added after the bill had already been reviewed in

the Texas House, allowed a water-supply district to transmit alternative energy and transport water in a single corridor, or right-of-way.

Brown represents Pickens' company, Mesa Water. He says, "My job is primarily defensive. I'm watching to make sure there is no legislation passed that creates obstacles to Pickens doing what he wants to do. I'm supposed to make sure nothing bad happens."

An Unfair Power

For Pickens, he can now use the power of eminent domain to force landholders to sell to him, or else he now has the legal right to simply take their land from them if they refuse his offer, all allegedly "for the common good" of Texans.

Pickens weaseled for this exclusive power of eminent domain because he needs it to force his plan upon Texas landowners, all so that he can build his huge pipeline to Dallas. Many Texans find this to be about as underhanded as you can get to steal someone's land. In Texas, "them's fightin' words," but then again, who can possibly stand up to the billionaire bully Pickens? Through his newfound power of eminent domain, Pickens has seized land across 11 counties so far.

According to an article in Business Week, Pickens owns more water than any other person in the country through his water rights in the Ogallala aquifer.



The Ogallala aquifer runs from Texas to South Dakota. (Graphics: TruTV)

Pickens has already sent 1,100 letters out to landowners living on the 250-mile corridor that he plans to build on. Pickens intends to essentially steal this land for only \$30 million, more than likely less than full market value.

Pickens isn't content with his local new found Texas power. He has now gone so far as to petition congress and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to expand the power of eminent domain and right-of-way, so that he can operate across state lines as well.

Pickens has added to the project by now proposing a vast \$12-billion wind farm, to sit on the same land he is taking for his pipeline. The cost of the water pipeline is estimated at \$1.5-billion.

According to Texas State Rep Warren Chisum (R) "The wind is meant to sweeten the deal. The big money for Pickens is in the water."

You can literally bank on that. Especially when water becomes extremely scarce and Pickens jacks the price up on survival.

"All I'm doing is selling surplus water," Pickens told Business Week

Considering that water is predicted to be in short supply soon, Pickens definition of surplus may be a tad bit conservative for the billionaire tycoon.

It should be noted that State Representative Chisum is also a wealthy Roberts County rancher who owns 12,000 acres next to Pickens and is also involved in selling off the people's water from the aquifer.

In Roberts County, residents cling to the hope that controls can be put in place to regulate and control pumping from the Ogallala aquifer.

In 1998, as entrepreneurs and local water utilities began buying up water rights, the groundwater conservation district decided to place restrictions on the rule of capture that it calls the 50-50 rule. A permit will only allow the aquifer to be drawn down by a maximum of 50%

Pickens says he will stand by the 50-50 rule. "I don't have any concerns about depleting the aquifer. All I'm doing is selling surplus water," he says. "I'm not about to drain all the water out of Roberts County. I have my ranch there. But I could sure take it down 50% and not hurt anybody. And it could make a lot of people a lot of money."

Especially T. Boone Pickens.

Stealing Foreign Water

Not to be outdone by Pickens is another Texas family who may have taken their cue from their fellow Texan. The Bush family has purchased nearly 100,000 acres of land in Paraguay. What's in Paraguay you say? A little town called Paso de Patria which is near the Triple Frontier (Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay), but is also very near Bolivian gas reserves and the Guarani indigenous water region, within the Triple Border.

The news so far isn't sitting well with county residents because the land that George W. Bush purchased in 2008 just so happens to sit on one of, if not the largest underground aquifers in the world, the Guarani aquifer.



The Bush family appears to be positioning themselves to takeover one of the world's largest aquifers.

Many are asking why the 43rd president needs a 98,840-acre ranch in Paraguay? Did I mention it is protected by its own U.S. military base? Mariscal Estigarribia air base, is run by US soldiers who have been exempted from war-crimes prosecution by the Paraguayan government. An interesting arrangement.

Manned in July 2005 with five hundred U.S. troops, equipped with planes, weapons and ammunition, Paraguay's Mariscal Estigarribia air base is a huge facility with an airfield that can accommodate B-52 bombers and Galaxy C-5 cargo planes. The base is actually larger than the international airport in the capital city of Asuncion. It has a large radar system, huge hangers, and can comfortably house up to 16,000 troops.

Yeah, well, nice to have a little firepower present when you're contemplating raiding another country's water and gas supply.

Reportedly, Jenna Bush paved the way with a secret diplomatic visit to Paraguayan President Nicanor Duarte and also U.S. Ambassador James Cason. The meetings were held in private.

America's ambassador to Paraguay, James Cason is an interesting person. Bush first stationed Cason in Havana, Cuba in 2002, but later transferred him to Paraguay in 2007. Cason is a former "political adviser" to the U.S. Atlantic Command and NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic. He has served stints in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Panama, essentially anywhere the U.S. has conducted its Central American wars over the past 30 years.

Argentina's undersecretary for Land for Social Habitat, Luis D'Elia, says the issue brings regional concern because it directly threatens the local natural resources. Water and gas are key.

Mr D'Elia is correct. Whether it is in the United States or a third world foreign nation, no individuals or multi-national corporations have the right to steal a natural resource that belongs to the people of the region, especially when it is a vital and necessary resource for life.

According to a source from the Physical Planning Department, most of the Chaco region belongs to private companies now. That can't be a good thing for the locals whose very existence depends on the availability of their local drinking water.

A strong argument could be made to support the notion that we do not go to third world countries to help them get clean drinking water, but instead to privatize it for the immoral multi-national corporations, like Perrier, Aquafina or even Coca Cola.

A Multi-National Effort

A few companies have gone even bolder yet, such as Perrier, a subsidiary of the multi-national Nestle corporation. They have invested heavily in Michigan and the Great Lakes. Locked behind two sets of chain link fence, huge siphoning pumps are deliberately hidden from view in the forest. They are pumping the Great Lakes dry and shipping the water overseas. Much of the Great Lakes water is headed for China, filled in massive cargo bags which are pulled across the ocean by a large supertanker. You might think that draining lakes that hold six quad-zillion gallons of fresh water would be impossible, but sadly enough, there is already a distinctive drop in the great lakes, quite noticeable to any who have seen it.

So with fresh water running out, it is supposed to become more precious than oil. According to the CIA, future wars will be fought over it.

It is now quite obvious that some ruthless entrepreneurs are trying to corner the market on this most precious of natural resources. These people clearly have no moral conscience if they can justify stealing water that does not belong to them. Just because you can reach a portion of an aquifer under your land that stretches across five states does not give you the right to drain off everyone else's water.

With a world water shortage on the way, it would undeniably be more beneficial to mankind if these ultra-rich water barons would invest instead in coastal based desalinization plants, rather than stealing the public's drinking water. Not only would they get the benefit of a vast water supply to exploit for sale, but there is also the leftover sea salt which could be sold for profit. Desalination is a proven working technology that is capable of bringing as much or more water to society than existing underground aquifers.

Take Action

It's time for the people to rise up and fight for a natural resource that belongs to all of us. Regional aquifers traverse vast amounts of land, covering many states, so for anyone to stake a claim to water that clearly is not exclusive to their land is nothing more than criminal activity from immoral individuals.

Tell your neighbors. Tell your friends. If we don't stand up to the water barons now, we will all pay dearly for the right to survive when water becomes scarce.

Call your Congressional representatives and demand that our water be protected under public domain for all of society, not just the private profit of soulless multi-national corporations and the morally challenged wealthy elite.

Aside from the air that we breathe, water is the most fundamental basic essential ingredient for life on this planet. It is no one's right to deny any human being or animal their God-given inalienable right to fresh air and clean water.

Start the fight now before it's too late.

This author has a well dug over 300 feet on my property, reaching deep down into the Jordan Aquifer which stretches from Iowa through Minnesota and Wisconsin. I suppose now that Pickens has set a legal precedent that transcends beyond multiple state boundaries, what is to stop me from staking my claim to the Jordan Aquifer?

Truth be told, the government has already GPS'd my well years ago, as they have every other private well in the United States. That's right, the US government is locating every single privately owned well and is marking them through GPS coordinates. Some believe that meters will one day be applied, limiting the amount of water that can be accessed from your own personal well. If that is the case, will Pickens' well and those of other water entrepreneurs be capped as well?

Of course not! They're filthy rich. They can bribe all the favorable treatment they need or want.

What is clear is that a double-standard is emerging regarding wells and regional aquifers. If you're rich, you can suck the water right out from under your neighbors property, across many states even, but if you're just the average John Q. Public, you very well might one day be limited in taking water from your own private well for your own personal use. This is a criminal injustice in the making. It's time to organize and put up a fight for our inalienable water rights.

We have a right to survive. We have a right to water.

It's time we fight to keep those rights, or risk losing them completely.