

WALKING 8 WATER

MONO LAKE • OWENS VALLEY • LOS ANGELES



WALKING WATER (WW) is an invitation. an action. an educational journey, and a prayer.

The goal of WW is to contribute to a vision for a cooperative reciprocal relationship between people and nature, specifically the waters, through pilgrimage & associated events. We will walk and be together in a practice of deep listening and speaking that contributes to community building. the sharing of old and new stories. the healing of differences and conflict. WW seeks to catalyze the discovery of possible new directions and solutions for the future of water. It is seen as a kind of acupuncture. a local action that will ripple through the larger body of the place. the people. and perhaps even the country and the world.

PHASE I  **SEPTEMBER 1-21, 2015**

ROUTE: Owens Lake, Eastern Sierra, California To Sylmar, the Cascades

THE WALK: Roughly 210 miles. walking an average of 10 miles a day. sleeping under the stars.

PARTICIPANTS: Roughly 45 local. national. and international walkers.

PARALLEL EVENTS: Being organized by inspired people and groups around the world.

LOCAL EVENTS: Taking place along the route.

WALKING WATER PATHWAYS

Some things to consider along the trail...

"There is not enough water here or on the planet for how we are using it. and what we have is not fairly distributed.. the plants. the animals. and many people are suffering while others are washing their cars.. women spend 200 million hours a day carrying water..."

"Things are getting on track. people are waking up. Owens Lake will be ok, the air is and will be better. change is happening.. droughts come and go. the pond will heal. the rains will come. there is plenty for all"

These are the words we hear today at times. Or maybe even think. or speak? They seem polar opposites... and at best just part of the story.

Some of **WALKING WATER** ask:

What is our *story*? Where do I stand? Who do I believe and what do I *really know*? Or how am I part of the success. the problem. the healing. or the struggle?

Can "we" be part of responsibly responding. engaging. living and effecting good relations with water amongst all peoples?

On **Walking Water** we are walking **for and with** the water... that enough be available for all of life.

ORIENTATION

Our plan is to walk alone and together – listening. bearing witness. opening to what arises – and out of that experience, confirming or changing our own way with water. confirming or changing our work. or the direction of our work. even perhaps finding a new way with water. with our families. our organizations. and our communities.

For most journeys there are maps of the terrain. showing the landscape, pointing the way. For others. it's a walkabout and a wander. For this one we are following the watershed. following the river where we can - so our route is generally pre-established. The map that will be needed most may be a different one than a topo.

We offer this living. ever-changing guide in the spirit and practice of community. of walking in good relations with all of life – with ourselves. each other. and all whom we meet along the trail. We offer these few guidelines to consider. to give you a feel for our intention. as they have served many of us working and

living in community over the years. And, as Heraclitus said. "You can never step *in* the same *river* twice." We'll see what serves. seems possible. relevant. necessary. We hope all of us together will contribute to it and continue to learn what is important to people and place. We know the map is not the territory and it will take each one of us to find and make a good path.



STEPS ALONG THE PATH

G The first step on this trail is to make sure we are truly called.

Each of us is an ambassador – walking for ourselves and others. We ask each invitee to explore deeply why. and what it means to be a part of this journey. What is the root of our intention. the source of this calling. When someone asks why we are walking. what will we answer? Are we carrying stories not yet heard. ones longing to be told?

How is it we are bridge people and weavers in a bigger story, a new story. one that helps bring about a holistic. just. and regenerative world?

When we are ready. let's ask those who will be touched by our decision to walk. We want to reach out to many through our choice to walk...checking in fully with our community. our families. children. partners. friends. ancestors. all beings. It is important to make it good with them and all aspects of ourselves. Making a commitment will help us on tough days along the trail. Being willing to go or willing not to go. looking for the signs. internally and externally. confirming this is the path for us. the right thing for us to do... knowing we will return different people.

G Step two isto prepare.

We encourage all and especially those from afar to get to know the waters where we live. What is our water situation and what is truly needed? How can this walk support both our local and global community?

We want to research and study what we can before the walk begins...respecting those who have gone before... learning about the Paiute-Shoshone people of the Owens Valley and region. what they may have to share and teach us.... learning about settlers. the miners. the ranchers. farmers. and the Department of Water and Power. We have asked all for the permission to walk across this land.

We are here to listen as well to all of those individuals and organizations who have worked to protect and care for the water in different ways. We each need to educate ourselves about cultural customs when travelling to a new place. being with different peoples and to adjust accordingly, while staying true to ourselves.

We need to prepare in all ways to travel light - to think about shedding some opinions as well as unnecessary clothes and electronics. What we bring we will have to carry. As Alan Bocock of the Big Pine Paiute said: "Prayer *is* an important way to prepare." Heart. mind. and spirit as well as our bodies need to be open and ready for the walk.

G Once we are ready...

We will make a ceremonial beginning and ending for our time - asking for the support and guidance we feel we need. Each person. as well. can listen for what may be meaningful to do on our own. Alone or together. we might name our concerns or even fears and welcome them as allies; and/or release that which does not serve and say goodbye to that which is not needed.

G Together, we will find ways to make it work financially.

Some of us will contribute our own funds to cover the expenses of the journey. All of us can gather friends around and ask them for support as well. We can all work to find a sponsor for everyone and anyone who needs one. offering reports. reflections. photos

and stories about our learning in return. or asking what they would like in exchange. We see this as an incredible opportunity we are co-creating to do this. truly a gift and we want to encourage many gifts moving throughout.

8 We all co-create the community.

We will take note each day of where we are and what our environment is and what it needs. We will continue to ask for guidance from locals as well as inwardly as to how to interact in healthy ways with the land and water. plants and animals. We will find different ways to begin each day. As well. each might consider starting the day with prayer. a quiet time. if only a minute. a practice that is ours – to awaken this connection with everything. We can reach out if we want company and can also remain quiet and opt out of conversation throughout the day's walk. Successful life in community involves being okay alone and together.



We ask each of us to consider everyone's well-being and intentions in being here. We are walkers together if not allies. perhaps most important to remember when and if we disagree. If something is troublesome. we encourage finding a good way to express it. and offer a suggestion for change. If we have something to say about someone. we encourage saying it directly to them rather than to others. As circle leader Christina Baldwin says. "Ask for what you need (from *physical* assistance to silence) and offer what *you* can."

We will have times for story. times for sharing what is emerging. times for offering what is being called for – what the land. the water. the place. the day. the people. and ~~the Valley~~ route we walk elicit.

None of us are asked to leave behind what we know or teach or stand for. of course. We are to be who we are... fully. AND. we are asking that we cultivate an experience of not knowing as well suspending disbelief. to check judgments. begin again. What if we listened to all with the curiosity of a child. the attention and the devotion of a new lover. or a mother? What then might emerge? How might our delivery system shift or change to meet a moment. the moment – in order to be heard and received? We might walk with the question: What will serve? To speak? To do? To teach. to learn? What story will be ancient and old and maybe familiar that deserves remembering. and what new story may come to us as individuals. as well as a group. not to mention a valley, a country. a world? How are we each in these days. alone and together. living as if we make a difference. as if our walk mattered. as if change does happen in so many seen and unseen ways?



8 Listening.

"Interviewing" others can provide needed attention & care. as well as elicit a lot of learning and connection from each person involved. Asking questions can be a gift. but if done all day may end up a burden. We can check and make sure our audience is engaged and that we are in dialogues versus monologues. Let people know we have come to learn from and with them. Explore what practices and stories truly serve us to share and others to hear. See how we can join in efforts already underway as well as offer some new or different approaches that we feel may serve. And may we remember. the time most important here is to be listening and learning from the water.

8 Bearing witness.

We are here to bear witness to the water and the land and the people. Oftentimes, the most important thing one can do is simply show up. be present. stand or sit at the site of the injustice. the wound. the waste. the pain. Equally meaningful in today's world is to bear witness to the beauty. any and all oases of healthy. balanced. living with the Earth and her peoples. to find and tell the good news story that is being born out of ancient wisdom and modern creativity. To bear witness is more than observing. It is the response of a peace activist and asks all of us to be fully in our hearts and the mind of compassion.

"To 'bear witness' today has become an approach to social action in which one seeks to be present to a situation with a compassionate heart and without preconceived ideas or solutions. One is open to truth as it reveals itself in the moment and trusts that from this openness and the encounter that flows from it, healing will naturally arise... It is based on the premise that we serve best that which we are connected with. Being listened to feels very different from being 'helped' or 'fixed.' and it evokes a different response. To choose to be present in this way creates the context for bridges to be built and change to occur." Elias Amidon & Elizabeth Roberts

8 We are part of a gifting culture.

We are here to help wherever we can. There will be much to be done: carrying. cleaning. washing. cooking and assisting... *Thinking like a circle*. we can explore what collective action can produce. And may we remember the golden rule of travel in the wild: leave no trace and when possible, leave the place a little better than we found it.

And may we not forget to simply be present and see what comes. After walking, we imagine many will simply want to sit and be in silence or join in with music and stories. magic and games.

When it's time to say goodbye, at different places along the trail, we may want to consider a gift that will communicate something as well as be useful. Information on water care, appropriate technology and resources is invaluable. Connections with other projects can help build the dream of real global community.

We ask ourselves not to leave behind expectations and dreams that cannot be fulfilled; to be aware of how our presence may have helped to catalyze certain things which can fall apart after we depart. to explore ways of continuity and sustainability.

Join us with the intention to leave added beauty behind each day and in whatever form that arises. As we go. we will continue to walk with water where we live and wherever we are.



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What are **you** walking for?
Join us in **WALKING FOR WATER**
SEPTEMBER 1-21.2015

Walking Water celebrates the beauty and power of water and recognizes that water is common ground. *worldwide.*

[www .walking-water.org](http://www.walking-water.org)