



What Does Rights for Nature/Ecosystems Mean?

Nature according to LAW, is mere property of the landowner. Nature has no legal standing. In other words - corporations have been recognized as "persons" but nature is still a slave without rights.

When industrial projects want to operate in your community, they go through a permitting process with the State. The process is administrative. That means it is a matter of following the rules for completing the application. **Once the application is filled out according to the guidelines, the permit issues - there is no discretion.** The permit becomes the private property of the corporation and makes the harm legal in your community.

Nature is without protection since the permit legalizes destruction up to a certain agreed upon limit - regulated in determined amounts deemed to "safe" for human exposure.

Responsibility to protect community wetlands, rivers, streams, bogs, forests and watersheds rests with the landowner. So, the more property someone owns, the more nature he can destroy. **When the community passes a law that recognizes ecosystems as legal entities, the whole community is empowered to protect forests, rivers, farmland, orchards, streams and rare places for the benefit of the whole community and for posterity.**

Our property values and the rights we exercise as landowners are at risk within the current legal structure when large-scale, industrial projects like fracking, industrial wind, hydro-electric transmission, fracked gas pipelines, commercial water extraction, mining, and disposal of toxic wastes apply for permission to operate in your town.

In many instances, State or Federal governments allow the use of eminent domain to take property from individual landowners along these project routes, claiming the project is "for the public good." Although landowners are compensated for the market value of the land, who can put a price on land that may have been your family for generations? There is no recourse under the current structure for a community to say "no" to any large-scale development project. **The Federal preempts State which preempts local decision-making and can take your property as long as they pay fair market value.**

Recognizing the legal standing of ecosystems allows the community to hold together to protect community wetlands, rivers, streams, bogs, forests, and watersheds from being destroyed. **Individual property rights are expanded, not taken away, by recognizing the rights of the human and natural community as a whole.**

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