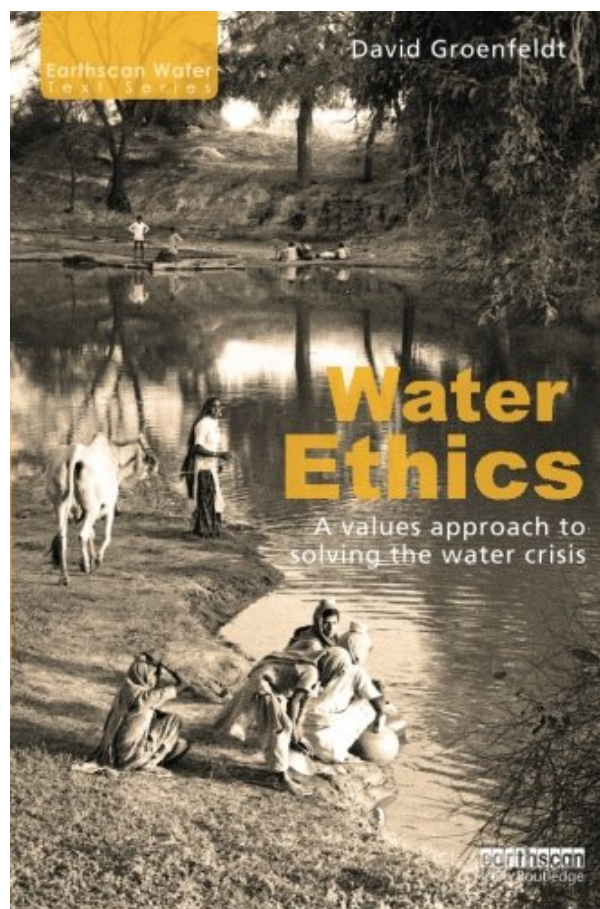
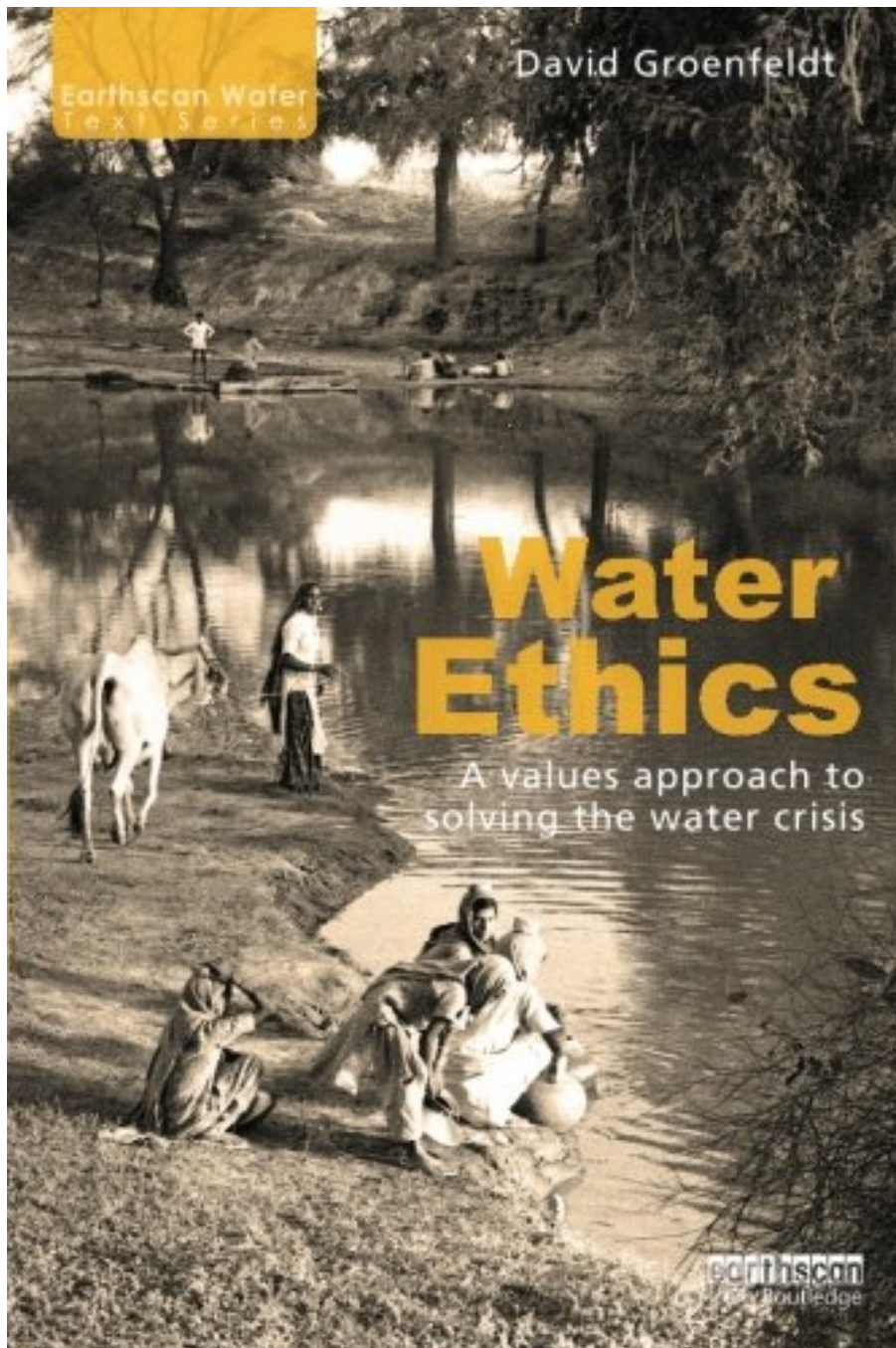


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About the Author

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This book introduces the idea that ethics are an intrinsic dimension of any water policy, program, or practice, and that understanding what ethics are being acted out in water policies is fundamental to an understanding of water resource management. Thus in controversies or conflicts over water resource allocation and use, an examination of ethics can help clarify the positions of conflicting parties as preparation for constructive negotiations.

The author shows the benefits of exposing tacit values and motivations and subjecting these to explicit public scrutiny where the values themselves can be debated. The aim of such a process is to create the proverbial 'level playing field', where values favoring environmental sustainability are considered in relation to values favoring short-term exploitation for quick economic stimulus (the current problem) or quick protection from water disasters (through infrastructure which science suggests is not sustainable).

The book shows how new technologies, such as drip irrigation, or governance structures, such as river basin organizations are neither "good" nor "bad" in their own right, but can serve a range of interests which are guided by ethics. A new ethic of coexistence and synergies with nature is possible, but ultimately depends not on science, law, or finances but on the values we choose to adopt. The book includes a wide range of case studies from countries including Australia, India, Philippines, South Africa and USA. These cover various contexts including water for agriculture, urban, domestic and industrial use, the rights of indigenous people and river, watershed and ecosystem management.

- Sales Rank: #2038377 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 2013-10-18
- Released on: 2013-09-10
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.21" h x .49" w x 6.14" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 216 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Clear and Informative

By Sarah Stanbury

Water Ethics is a lucid and informative introduction to one of the most pressing environmental issues of our time: the ethics of sustainable water for ourselves and future generations across the globe. Groenfeldt's thorough research is presented with clarity and enlivened with illustrative stories from his life-long work as an anthropologist in water management. The book introduces the historical background of current policies, such as the principle of "prior appropriation" in the American West, and argues for how and why we need a reformulated water ethics and set of laws. Chapters address the rights of water use in relation to dams and rivers, agriculture (which accounts, astonishingly, for more than two-thirds of the earth's fresh-water use), industry, and cities. Chapters also take up questions of governance and indigenous rights. The book concludes with a call for a "new water ethic." Water Ethics is required reading for anyone who cares about one of the world's most important—and endangered—resources. After reading this book, the idea of "wasting water" will never be the same. SS

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Stimulates new ideas for water policy

By Michael Agar

Water Ethics takes seriously the New Mexican saying that "agua es vida." Drawing from his extensive experience in several countries with the many ways and many places that water and humans deal with each other, Groenfeldt describes numerous examples that compare and contrast uses of water--by business, by cities, by farmers, by indigenous people, by governments, etc--and then shows the variety of values that can be in play within each of those categories--economic, environmental, cultural, social, health, recreational, etc. The book demonstrates how comparison can lead to innovation. After the exploration of a variety of uses and users in different locations, a reader sees new ways of thinking previously unimagined. In this time of global water crises, new ideas that might improve both agua and vida are worth their weight in gold.

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