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GRASPING WATER



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from multiple perspectives within and beyond the academy.

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The cover image is of Delta of the Yellow River, China (top) and Delta of the Zambezi River, Mozambique (bottom). Landsat imagery courtesy of NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and U.S. Geological Survey.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO ISSUE EIGHT

By Patrick Nunnally, Editor

I will keep this brief before I turn things over to our capable and distinguished guest editors Ruth Mostern and Ann Waltner, both of whom are professors of Chinese and world history.

A year ago June, when the Grasping Water Institute was wrapping up, I reflected on how interesting it was to hear thoughtful, incisive talks about rivers I had never heard of, from people whose work I did not regularly follow. “It would be great,” I thought, “if some of these folks could be persuaded to write for us.”

The results, thanks to Professors Mostern and Waltner, are in front of you.

I just want to make three introductory points. The first is that the international dimension reflected in this issue is new for us, and welcome. It’s a truism that travel broadens the individual; the same can be said about learning about rivers and water issues far afield of one’s usual domain. You will continue see work from international places here, though always with some thought about its relevance to a North American audience.



Whanganui River, New Zealand by Jason Pratt, via Flickr. CC BY 2.0

Second, another new component for us this issue is the inclusion of material previously posted elsewhere, in this case through “[The Conversation](#),” a digital, Creative Commons licensed platform that covers all manner of subjects with “academic rigor and journalistic flair.” The two pieces included in our issue, found in our Perspectives column, directly address issues we think about a great deal. They are insightful, clearly written, and contribute substantially to the discussions we are creating. We’re pleased to include them, and hope you find them interesting as well.

Finally, this issue, which marks the completion of two years of publication, is our first issue to

include a peer-reviewed article. Peer review has long been a standard for publication in academic circles. A journal like ours, which includes work of academic writers as well as community-based thinkers, and which reaches audiences on and off campuses, can benefit from offering peer review for writers to whom that is important. We can now incorporate this kind of review and assessment into our work, and look forward to working with early career academic writers in coming issues.

Happy reading!

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About the Author

Patrick Nunnally coordinates the River Life Program in the Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Minnesota. He serves as editor for *Open Rivers* and was one of the lead scholars for the University’s John E. Sawyer Seminar, “Making the Mississippi: Formulating New Water Narratives for the 21st Century and Beyond,” funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.