

JANUARY 2026 SPEAKER

MAUDE BARLOW

“DEFENDING THE WATER”

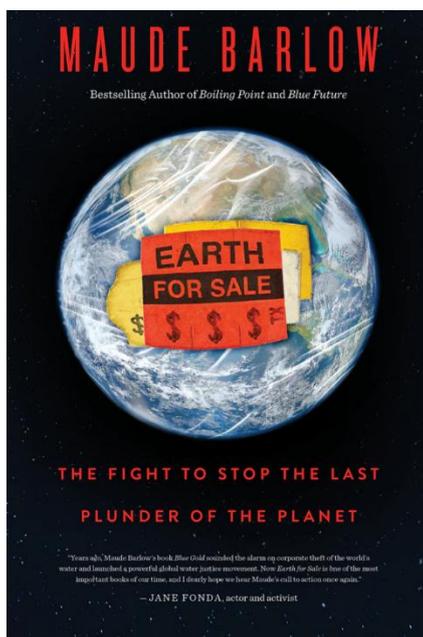
“We love you and need you,” Maude said about CFUW’s commitment to what she calls “defending the water.” Her Zoom talk was arranged by UWCNY and tuned into by thirty CFUW clubs across Canada. She has been an activist in this cause for forty years, including as an adviser to the United Nations.

“It’s very much a women’s issue. It’s women who fetch water. In sub-Saharan Africa women are estimated to spend forty *billion* hours every year searching for water., One-quarter of the world’s population doesn’t have access to water; one-half not to clean water. Data says the demand for fresh water will surpass supply by the end of this decade and it has been predicted that by 2040 severe water scarcity will affect most of the world.”

She went on: “There’s a myth that Canada has an abundance of water, but in fact only twenty percent is fresh water and only seven percent of it accessible. There is drought in parts of the country.” She said Canada’s water supply is at risk from U.S. President Donald Trump, citing his oft-cited desire to annex Canada “or short of that helping himself to our Great Lakes’ water through ignoring long-standing treaties meant to prevent that.” She warned commercializing/privatizing water supply. “My hope is that Prime Minister Mark Carney in his drive to stop Canada being so dependent economically on the U.S, by using our natural resources to fuel our economy remains diligent about our water. Canada can stand firm because we have water that others don’t.”

She noted that in 2021 in a world first an Innu council in northeastern Quebec bestowed “legal personhood” on the Magpie (“Mutuhekau Shipun” in Innu) River, which connects with the Gulf of St. Lawrence, giving it “the right to live, exist, and flow.” They wanted to prevent hydro power development project which they said would be harmful environmentally. Their action has become a guidepost for those worldwide seeking to protect freshwater rivers, part of a “Rights of Nature” movement.

Susan Goldenberg



Maude Barlow’s new book, *Earth for Sale -The Fight to Stop the Last Plunder of the Planet*, will be available on May 5.

It can be pre-ordered at

<https://ecwpress.com/products/earth-for-sale>

or at Indigo, Amazon or an independent book seller in your community.