



**Multimedia Library Collection: Environmental Values (journal)**

**Johnson, Baylor L., "Ethical Obligations in a Tragedy of the Commons"**

Johnson, Baylor L.

Johnson, Baylor L. "Ethical Obligations in a Tragedy of the Commons." *Environmental Values* 12, no. 3 (2003): 271–87. [doi:10.3197/096327103129341324](https://doi.org/10.3197/096327103129341324) .

When people use a resource without a coordinated plan the result is often a tragedy of the commons in which the resource is depleted. Many environmental resources display the characteristics of a developing tragedy of the commons. Many believe that each person is ethically obligated to reduce use of the commons to the sustainable level. I argue that this is mistaken. In a tragedy of the commons there is no reasonable expectation that individual, voluntary action will succeed. Our obligation is not fruitlessly to reduce individual use, but to support a collective agreement to reduce everyone's use to the sustainable level.

— Text from [The White Horse Press](#) website

All rights reserved. © 2003 The White Horse Press

**Download:**

PDF: [https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key\\_docs/ev\\_12no.3\\_johnson\\_baylor\\_l.pdf](https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/ev_12no.3_johnson_baylor_l.pdf)

**Related links:**

- Article on the official website  
<http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/EV/EV1213.html>
- The White Horse Press  
<http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/>

**Websites linked in this text:**

- [http://dx.doi.org/10.3197/096327103129341324](https://doi.org/10.3197/096327103129341324)
- <http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/EV/EV1213.html>