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"Editorial Note: 'Pasts and Futures of Water'"

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> Water is a basic necessity for all forms of life on earth. Regarding human activities, a reliable water source is essential not only to supplying drinking water but also to sustaining agriculture, energy production, trade and transport—the foundations of economically and culturally thriving societies. However, as the number of people inhabiting our planet increases, all these activities have more and more serious impacts on human health, the environment and the overall quality of life and wellbeing. Due to pollution and water quality deterioration, diminishing supplies, extreme phenomena brought about by climate change, and serious gaps in service delivery, issues related to water governance become ever more important. [...]
>
> This theme section of *Environment and History* comprises four cross-cutting synthesis articles based on papers presented under the four major conference themes [of the 5th International Water History Association (IWHA) Conference 'Pasts and Futures of Water' in June 2007]: (i) water, health and sanitation; (ii) water, food and economy; (iii) water and the city; and (iv) water governance and policy.
>
> — From the editorial.

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