



Anniversary Story

“Eternal, Not Historical”

By Jay Beaumont, PE, Former Groundwater Foundation Board Member and Orange County, New York Groundwater Guardian

In October of 2002, Jennifer of the Groundwater Foundation staff called me to ask if I would give an invocation at the Awards Luncheon at the upcoming Groundwater Guardian Conference. As I flew to the conference from New York, I didn't have any ideas for my invocation. On the plane I was reading [Cradle to Cradle](#) by William McDunough and Michael Braungart. That is where I found the perfect story for my invocation.

“Kai Lee, a professor of environmental science at Williams College, tells an enlightening story about native peoples' view of place. In 1986 Lee was involved in plans for the long-term storage of radioactive wastes at the Hanford Reservation, a large site in central Washington State, where the United States government had produced plutonium for nuclear weapons. He spent a morning with scientists discussing how to make a waste site so that even in the distant future, people would not accidentally drill for water there or otherwise bring about harmful exposures and releases. During a break he saw several members of the Yakima Indian Nation, whose traditional lands include much of the Hanford Reservation. They had come there to talk with federal officials about another matter. The Yakima were surprised -- even amused -- at Kai's concern over their descendents' safety. 'Don't worry,' they assured him. 'We'll tell them where it is.' As Kai pointed out to us, 'Their conception of themselves and their place was not historical, as mine was, but eternal. This would always be their land. They would warn others not to mess with the waste we'd left.'”

I shared that story in my invocation and added that the story and other conference speakers' themes give the good guidance for our work to protect groundwater.

- Make our conception of the earth and its resources eternal not historical.
- Teach our children to be stewards of water.
- Foster clean drinking water for all
- Promote indoor plumbing for all
- Practice watershed stewardship
- Protect wellheads
- Conserve water
- Be sustainable

Celebrate with us at the [2015 Groundwater Foundation National Conference!](#)