

Reframing the human–wetlands relationship through a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Wetlands

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Abstract. The proposed Universal Declaration of the Rights of Wetlands is consistent with the principles of the rights of Nature, and reframes the human–wetlands paradigm away from one of degradation and loss to one of ecological sustainability that supports the Web of Life and continued delivery of Nature’s contributions to people. Given the significance of the role of wetlands in reversing climate destabilisation and biodiversity degradation and loss, the paradigm shift engendered by a Declaration opens new possibilities to align wetlands, climate, and biodiversity policy, consistent with the [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(2021\)](#) proposals, to guide effective governmental and non-governmental mechanisms. Widening the acceptance of the concepts presented in the Declaration is part of a process to reframe human–wetlands relationships, and is ongoing and iterative.

Keywords: legal personhood, rights of Nature, intergovernmental policy, human–wetlands relationship, wetlands, Ramsar.

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Introduction

As outlined in [Davies *et al.* \(2021a\)](#), there is increasing acknowledgement that Nature, including wetlands, has rights that are analogous to the rights of people or organisations, with these being equally defensible in law. This has the potential to offer a powerful means for stemming environmental degradation worldwide, including for wetlands that are in dire condition globally, as shown by the Global Wetland Outlook ([Ramsar Convention on Wetlands 2018](#)). The outcomes from the Outlook have been corroborated by other investigations, including a citizen-science survey ([McInnes *et al.* 2020](#)), and an analysis of the condition of wetlands based on information contained in

national reports supplied by Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands ([Davidson *et al.* 2020](#)). We view the rights approach as consistent with the recent joint report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change demonstrating the need to address climate and biodiversity in an integrated manner ([Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2021](#)).

The recognition of rights of Nature is becoming more prevalent, as shown by international charters and declarations developed in recent years. This includes the following:

- (1) World Charter for Nature, UN General Assembly, 28 October 1982 (<https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f22a10.html>, accessed 25 June 2021);
- (2) Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth (<https://therightsofnature.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-UNIVERSAL-DECLARATION-OF-THE-RIGHTS-OF-MOTHER-EARTH-APRIL-22-2010.pdf>, accessed 25 June 2021);
- (3) Universal Declaration of the Rights of Rivers (<https://www.earthlawcenter.org/river-rights#:~:text=The%20Declaration%20draws%20from%20victories,understandings%20of%20healthy%20river%20systems>, accessed 27 November 2020).

Reference to the rights of Nature may also be included in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework being negotiated through the United Nations (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/3064/749a/0f65ac7f9def86707f4eafa/post2020-prep-02-01-en.pdf>, accessed 25 June 2021).

Degradation of wetlands will continue without additional and new approaches to ensure their future. One new approach is to reframe the concept of wetland ecological character that underpins the conservation and wise use mechanisms of the Ramsar Convention (Kumar *et al.* 2021). There are also calls to address the effectiveness of Multilateral Environmental Agreements that have so far not stemmed climate change or the degradation and loss of biodiversity (Davidson *et al.* 2020; Finlayson and Gardner 2021). The proposal from Davies *et al.* (2021a) to take a different, rights-based approach provides an untried option that will take time to enter the solutions framework and to be implemented at local to global levels (see Bridgewater 2021; Davies *et al.* 2021b). Further, it could be integrated with other new approaches, such as the reframing of the concept of wetland ecological character (Kumar *et al.* 2021).

Widening acceptance

With the above in mind, the proposed Universal Declaration of the Rights of Wetlands (Declaration), as shown in Box 1, is for discussion and potential adoption internationally, nationally and by local communities, including by Indigenous communities. This includes national and international non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations in addition to governmental and quasi-governmental organisations (see Table S1 of the Supplementary material). While the proposal is for a universally applicable Declaration, there is evidence that not all communities concur with the Rights of Nature premise (O'Donnell and Talbot-Jones 2018; O'Donnell *et al.* 2020). However, it is anticipated that adopting a ROW Declaration will create a paradigm shift that will lead to increased capacity to manage wetlands in a manner that contributes to reversing biodiversity loss and global climate destabilisation, and better integrates humans with Nature.

In support of a proposed Declaration, we present seven opportunities for further consideration by wetland users and decision-makers.

- (1) In recent decades, it has been more widely acknowledged that humans and the natural world with all of its biodiversity are interconnected with healthy functioning of wetlands and the benefits that wetlands provide to local communities (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005; Russi *et al.* 2013), and that wetlands play a significant role in global climate regulation, mitigation and adaptation (Moomaw *et al.* 2018; Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2021).
- (2) Wetlands have significance for the spiritual and sacred inspirations and belief systems of many people.
- (3) Indigenous Peoples and local communities (Verschuuren 2016), who live in close relationship with wetlands, have and do so with Indigenous knowledge, understanding, respect and care for wetlands according to belief systems, systems of governance, and knowledge of science and technology (Papayannis and Pritchard 2010; Russell *et al.* 2021).
- (4) Humans are integrally connected with wetlands and exist in a relationship with many aspects of wetland biodiversity and ecological processes as members of the Earth community. Many cultures have acknowledged this interconnectedness with the wider biosphere by conferring 'personhood' on Nature, as shown in the timeline and world map presented by Davies *et al.* (2021a).
- (5) Implicit support for the Rights of Wetlands comes from the United Nations General Assembly's World Charter for Nature, representing a global move towards a more respectful relationship with Nature. The ethos represented by the Charter was further developed between 2009 and 2018 with nine United Nations resolutions on Harmony with Nature (<http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org/>, accessed 25 June 2021).
- (6) Legal recognition of the inherent rights of Nature is occurring in a growing number of jurisdictions. This includes recognition by the Colombian Supreme Court of the Colombian Amazon as an 'entity subject to rights' (Wilson and Lee 2019), recognition of the rights and legal and living personhood of the Whanganui River through the *Te Awa Tupua Act (Whanganui River Claims Settlement Act 2017)* by the Māori iwi and the New Zealand Parliament (<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2017/0007/latest/whole.html>, accessed 25 June 2021), and Ecuador's recognition of the rights of Nature in its Constitution (<https://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Ecuador/english08.html>, accessed 25 June 2021).
- (7) There is also evidence that existing environmental law may not be achieving its objective because of difficulties in applying international treaties to local situations, including taking on board the views of local communities, and balancing these with interests of multinational corporations, as raised for parts of Oceania (Payri and Vidal 2019). The sovereignty of states can also be a limit to the harmonisation of environmental management.

Considering these opportunities, we are interested in presenting the proposal for a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Wetlands to intergovernmental policymakers, including the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention. An initial ambition is to obtain formal statements that 'welcome' or 'support' the proposed Declaration, and to encourage Contracting Parties to the Convention individually to incorporate Rights of Wetlands into their national procedures, and invite others to join in ensuring that these rights are understood, respected and upheld through local traditions and governance arrangements, and potentially, further developed.

Box 1. Proposed Universal Declaration of the Rights of Wetlands (reproduced from Davies *et al.* 2021a)

- **Acknowledging** that wetlands are essential to the healthy functioning of Earth processes and provision of essential ecosystem services, including climate regulation at all scales, water supply and water purification, flood storage, drought mitigation and storm damage prevention;
- **Acknowledging** that wetlands have significance for the spiritual or sacred inspirations and belief systems of many people worldwide, but particularly for Indigenous peoples and local communities living in close relationship to wetlands, and that wetlands provide opportunities to learn from and about Nature, which supports scientific understanding and innovation, cultural expression and artistic creativity;
- **Further acknowledging** that humans and the natural world with all of its biodiversity depend on the healthy functioning of wetlands and the benefits that they provide, and that wetlands play a significant role in global climate regulation;
- **Alarmed** that existing wetland conservation and management approaches have failed to stem the loss and degradation of wetlands of all types around the globe;
- **Further alarmed** that global climate destabilisation and biodiversity losses are accelerating and that efforts to reverse these trends are failing;
- **Acknowledging** that peoples around the world of many cultures and faiths have recognised for millennia that Nature, or elements of Nature, are sentient living beings with inherent value and rights independent of their value to humans, and that Indigenous peoples, local communities and non-governmental organisations have been contributing to a global movement to recognise the rights of Nature;
- **Aware** that continued degradation and loss of wetlands threaten the very fabric of the planetary Web of Life, on which depend the livelihoods, wellbeing, community life and spirituality of many people, particularly Indigenous peoples and local communities who live in close relationship with wetlands;
- **Guided by** recent legal recognition of the inherent rights of Nature, including recognition of the entire Colombian Amazon as an ‘entity subject to rights’ by the Colombian Supreme Court; recognition of the rights and legal and living personhood of the Whanganui River through the *Te Awa Tupua Act* (Whanganui River Claims Settlement Act) agreed on by the Māori iwi and the New Zealand Parliament; and Ecuador’s first-in-the-world recognition of the rights of Nature in their Constitution;
- **Convinced** that recognising the enduring rights and the legal and living personhood of all wetlands around the world will enable a paradigm shift in the human–Nature relationship towards greater understanding, reciprocity and respect leading to a more sustainable, harmonious and healthy global environment that supports the wellbeing of both human and non-human Nature;
- **Further convinced** that recognising the rights and legal and living personhood of all wetlands and the paradigm shift that this represents will lead to an increased capacity to manage wetlands in a manner that contributes to reversing the destabilisation of the global climate and biodiversity loss;
- **Declares** that all wetlands are entities entitled to inherent and enduring rights, which derive from their existence as members of the Earth community and should possess legal standing in courts of law. These inherent rights include the following:
 - (1) The right to exist
 - (2) The right to their ecologically determined location in the landscape
 - (3) The right to natural, connected and sustainable hydrological regimes
 - (4) The right to ecologically sustainable climatic conditions
 - (5) The right to have naturally occurring biodiversity, free of introduced or invasive species that disrupt their ecological integrity
 - (6) The right to integrity of structure, function, evolutionary processes and the ability to fulfil natural ecological roles in the Earth’s processes
 - (7) The right to be free from pollution and degradation
 - (8) The right to regeneration and restoration

We see the proposal for a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Wetlands as a key step in the global efforts to ensure that wetlands, their biota and the benefits they provide to people are sustained. This recognition could be as important as that which accompanied the acceptance by governments of the Ramsar Convention in 1971, an initiative that was led by non-governmental organisations and waterbird experts (Matthews 1993), who were likely to be less constrained than governmental officials to launch an initiative of this kind.

We anticipate that further dialogue around the principles behind the proposed Declaration will refine it and will identify ways to strengthen the resolve of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention to achieve its mission, namely ‘The conservation

and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world’ (www.ramsar.org/about/the-convention-on-wetlands-and-its-mission, accessed 29 July 2021). The triennial meetings of the Contracting Parties of the Convention provide an opportunity to develop and articulate a position on the Rights of Wetlands generally, and specifically on the proposal for a Declaration. In support of this opportunity, the Declaration has been translated into French and Spanish, the official languages of the Convention along with English. Further translations would also be very useful.

This opportunity could also include investigating synergies with other international efforts, while confirming explicitly the

benefits for wetlands, as raised by Bridgewater (2021). Similarly, the INTECOL international wetland conferences and the meetings of the Society of Wetland Scientists provide opportunities to articulate views on the scientific underpinnings for reframing the human–wetlands relationships and to develop further the rights of wetlands concept (Simpson *et al.* 2020).

The Declaration has been used to support efforts for improved governance of Lake Tota in Colombia (see information from Fundación Montecito in Table S1 and <http://www.fundacion-montecito.org/actividadesprincipales-gobernanza.html>, accessed 30 July 2021), and is being discussed and shared with Indigenous and local communities in several countries, and thus can be explored, modified, further developed, operationalised and integrated into the existing rights of Nature initiatives simultaneously at local to global scales.

A proposed Declaration

The Declaration proposed by Davies *et al.* (2021a; Box 1) starts by noting some of the court decisions, UN Resolutions and other initiatives that provide a basis for recognising rights of Nature, and expresses the importance of applying this to wetlands. It contains eight specific Rights of Wetlands based on their ecological structure and condition, as well as the right to recovery from adverse actions by people. These are similar to the premises that underpin the Ramsar Convention's concept of ecological character (Pritchard 2018), defined as 'the combination of the ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services that characterise the wetland at a given point in time' (p. 474). Integration of the social-ecological view of wetland character articulated by Kumar *et al.* (2021) may lead to the inclusion of further specific rights in a future iteration of a Declaration, but such discussions have yet to occur, and may well extend for some time and across many communities.

Recognition of the Rights of Wetlands outlined in the proposed Declaration could lead to a fundamental shift in the prevailing conception of our relationships with wetlands, and with the legal frameworks that regulate our interactions with wetlands. This could begin to constitute a step-change for reversing current trends of wetland deterioration and loss and the concomitant loss of ecosystem services. The authors of the proposed Universal Declaration of the Rights of Wetlands seek a wider dialogue and feedback, and expansion of documentation of the history and cultural diversity of the recognition of the rights of Nature, to help reframe the human–wetlands relationships. In this respect, they have, in a separate article (Davies *et al.* 2021b), welcomed the critique of the proposal provided by Bridgewater (2021) and recognise that on-ground evidence of the value of the proposed approach is needed, and will take time.

Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable because no new data were generated or analysed during this study.

Conflicts of interest

Nick Davidson, Siobhan Fennessy and Max Finlayson are editors for *Marine and Freshwater Research*. Despite this relationship, those authors took no part in the review and acceptance

of this manuscript, in line with the publishing policy. The authors declare that they have no further conflicts of interest.

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Supplementary material

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Table S1. List of organisations that have endorsed the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Wetlands or have posted an article on their website

Information on the organisations, the endorsement date and their URL are given. The list is accessible at the following website and will be updated as required:

<https://www.rightsofwetlands.org/>, accessed 24 June 2021

Organisation	Endorsement date or website posting date	URL
Endorsing organisations		
African Biodiversity Network ‘The solutions that we seek already lie within our indigenous cultures. ABN is a network committed to unearthing and implementing African solutions to African problems and building solidarity on biodiversity and community rights issues on the continent.’ ABN website.	Feb. 2021	https://africanbiodiversity.org/
AFRICE: African Institute of Culture and Ecology ‘The Mission of AFRICE is to promote Indigenous knowledge and livelihoods improvement and ecosystems conservation, among communities, socio-cultural institutions and local and national governments and through capacity strengthening, research and advocacy.’ AFRICE website.	Feb. 2021	http://africeug.org/
COBRA Collective ‘The COBRA Collective CIC is a UK-based social enterprise launched in 2016 with a clear vision: to see a world where marginalized communities are empowered to control their own destiny. Our mission is to empower communities to achieve positive change through capacity building, strengthening resilience, and developing long-term partnerships and collaborations.’ COBRA Collective website.	Feb. 2021	https://cobracollective.org/
Community Environmental Legal Defence Fund (CELDF) ‘At CELDF, we are not a typical environmental organization. We assist communities to develop first-in-the-nation, ground-breaking laws to protect rights, including worker, environmental and democratic rights, and rights of nature. CELDF provides free and low-cost legal services, grassroots organizing, and education, to communities, states, and countries facing injustice.’ CELDF website	Dec. 2020	https://celdf.org/ https://celdf.org/2020/12/celdf-endorses-universal-declaration-rights-of-wetlands/
Curating Tomorrow ‘A consultancy for museums, the heritage sector, and anyone interested in creating a better future.’ Curating Tomorrow website.	Mar. 2021	https://www.curatingtomorrow.co.uk/
EarthLore Foundation ‘EarthLore works with rural communities to accompany them on a journey to revive their traditional ecological knowledge and practices, seed diversity and farming and governance systems, essential for navigating climate change and defending their land against growing threats from mining and industrial exploitation.’ EarthLore Foundation website.	Feb. 2021	http://earthlorefoundation.org/
Earth Thrive (GARN Member) ‘Non-governmental organization with charitable aims for the holistic approach to prevention and remediation of ecocides and establishment of Nature rights in the SE Europe/Balkans and Mediterranean regions. We are proud to announce that we are in the process of being accepted to the UN Harmony with Nature program as a knowledge expert.’ EarthThrive website.	Jan. 2021	https://www.earth-thrive.org/
Fundación Lagunas Costeras ‘The coastal lagoons of Uruguay are a part of a system that spreads from the country’s eastern seaboard to southeast Brazil. At our Foundation we focus on coastal lagoons because we aspire to preserve the great biodiversity, natural beauty and array of ecosystemic services of these unique areas for future generations.’ FLC website.	Jan. 2021	http://lagunascosteras.org.uy/en/home-flc/
Fundación Montecito ‘Mission: generate actions and reflections for the environment; Andean wetlands in particular. With particular emphasis on helping to strengthen governance in Lake Tota. Vision: our NGO seeks to see territories as increasingly sustainable and harmonious living spaces in the man–natura relationship, with better levels of human formation, environmental culture and appropriation of ancestral values, providing for this purpose with its own example and the development of related projects.’ Fundación Montecito website.	Feb. 2021	http://www.fundacionmontecito.org/
Gaia Foundation	Jan. 2021	https://www.gaiafoundation.org/

Organisation	Endorsement date or website posting date	URL
<p>‘We are committed to... Reviving and protecting cultural and biological diversity in order to restore resilience for ecosystems and local communities, across connected landscapes. Enhancing traditional knowledge and practices for land, seed, food and water sovereignty, thereby enabling communities to determine their own locally and culturally appropriate pathways. Linking with social movements who together can challenge the industrial growth economy and promote pathways for systemic transformation. Speaking out for ‘Gaia’ – Mother Earth – and the rights of future generations of all species, yet to inhabit this planet. Restoring a respectful relationship with, and a holistic understanding of, our one planet Earth. Celebrating and re-weaving the web of Life, which sustains us all.’ Gaia Foundation website.</p>	Dec. 2021	https://www.facebook.com/GARNEUROPE/
<p>GARN Europe (European Rights of Nature Hub) ‘A Europe wide movement working on introducing, establishing and respecting Rights of Nature in law, in work, in life’. GARN Europe website.</p> <p>GRABE–Benin ‘GRABE–Benin is a non-profit organization committed to the sustainable development of the rural world, working mainly with children, women and peasants. GRABE–Benin aims to increase environmental awareness among the people through education and outreach. The organization also aims to develop actions to help significantly reduce human pressure on natural ecosystems, while also regenerating, developing and preserving them...Among their areas of operation are the use of knowledge and indigenous knowledge, cultural biodiversity, ecocitizenship, and and local development and support to indigenous peoples.’ GRABE–Benin website.</p>	Feb. 2021	https://grabe-benin.org/
<p>National Community Rights Network. ‘The National Community Rights Network (NCRN) is a central resource for advancing a movement for local self-government through community rights. Rights-based organizing empowers communities to elevate the rights of people and nature over illegitimate corporate rights that impede local and direct democracy.’ NCRN website.</p>	Feb. 2021	https://www.nationalcommunityrightsnetwork.org/
<p>Ohio Community Rights Network ‘The mission of the OHCRN is to establish a network of just communities working to advance, secure and protect the inalienable rights of all Ohioans to democratic local self-governance, to sustainable food, energy and economic systems, and the rights of nature to exist and flourish throughout Ohio.’ OCRN website.</p>	Mar. 2021	https://www.ohiocrn.org/
<p>Rights of Nature Sweden (Members of GARN and the UN Harmony with Nature initiative) ‘The Swedish Network for the Rights of Nature was founded in 2017 by individuals and organisations: Lodyn, End Ecocide Sweden (part of the End Ecocide on Earth network), Solidarity Sweden–Latin America and Swedish Earth Rights Lawyers.</p>	Jan. 2021	http://www.naturensrattigheter.se/in-english/
<p>We are working on many arenas and in diverse forms for Rights of Nature as a systemic tool for the transition to a society in harmony with nature. We arrange the Earth Rights Conference as a platform for connecting and spreading these ideas.’ RON Sweden website.</p> <p>Rights of Mother Earth ‘We are asking the UN to formally engage in drafting and adopting a Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth to complement the Human Rights Declaration. A Declaration acknowledging Nature as a living being, deserving of rights and protection just like humans.</p>	Jan. 2021	www.RightsofMotherEarth.com https://www.rightsofmotherearth.com/declaration
<p>Under current law, Nature is treated as a commodity and has no standing in court. This void in the law is at the core of the depletion and destruction endured by Nature today and must be corrected. We propose the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth from the people’s conference in Cochabamba to be adopted by the UN, or to be used as inspiration. This Declaration includes the wisdom and knowledge of people from ancient and modern societies from around the world and points the way to aligning our laws and ways of living with those of Nature.’ Rights of Mother Earth website.</p>	Feb. 2021	
<p>SALT: Society for Alternative Learning & Transformation</p>	Feb. 2021	

Organisation	Endorsement date or website posting date	URL
<p>‘Society for Alternative Learning and Transformation (SALT) is a national non- governmental organization working with indigenous and local communities in three counties of Kenya, namely, Tharaka-Nithi, Embu and Samburu. It works with individuals and communities around the issues of bio-cultural diversity. SALT works to inspire individuals and communities who are drawn to holistic strategies for creating and enhancing community and ecosystem resilience underpinned by holistic learning and transformative experiences. Practitioners in SALT are committed to deep learning and transformative processes, which facilitate the re-emergence of societies which are passionately and confidently walking their path of resilience in the face of multiple crises of the modern day world. SALT works with potent communities who have experienced the negative impact of colonization and globalization and have been fragmented, fractured, shattered and destroyed and their cultural identity undermined. SALT is thus, committed to decolonization of the souls and minds of these communities from the bondage of such negative foreign influences. SALT is a home and refuge for the individuals and communities who have consciously chosen and committed to walking this path; to experiment, explore and re-discover their cultural identity. SALT is an intentional and focused organisation with a particular purpose towards communities. Its practices are unique, radical and cutting edge. It re-connects people with their culture and nature to establish true relationship and deep connection with Nature. SALT’s processes bring empowerment and resilience. Once again deep learning and transformation are the cornerstones of SALT’s work with communities in Kenya.’ SALT Facebook page.</p>		https://www.facebook.com/Society-for-Alternative-Learning-and-Transformation-SALT-710520272293538/
<p>SnowChange Cooperative Winner of the prestigious Worldwide Fund for Nature 2002 ‘Panda Prize’ for best national ecological project, SnowChange was started in late 2000 to document and work with local and Indigenous communities of the northern regions. SnowChange is an organisation unlike any other in Finland or in the Circumpolar North: ‘We are Finns devoted to the advancement of our traditions and culture. We hold the traditional knowledge, stories, handicrafts, fishing and hunting and other elements of our forest culture sacred’. SnowChange Cooperative is also a network of local and Indigenous cultures around the world: ‘our partners include the Saami, Chukchi, Yukaghir, Inuit, Inuvialuit, Inupiaq, Gwitchin, Icelandic, Tahltan, Maori, Indigenous Australian and many other local and Indigenous peoples and communities’. Members of these Nations form the international Steering Committee of SnowChange.</p>	Mar. 2021	http://www.snowchange.org/
<p>Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) ‘SER is the leading international organization working on the science, practice, and policy of ecological restoration. SER advances the science, practice, and policy of ecological restoration to sustain biodiversity, improve resilience in a changing climate, and re-establish an ecologically healthy relationship between nature and culture.’ SER website.</p>	Mar. 2021	https://www.ser.org/
<p>Society of Wetland Scientists ‘The mission of the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS) is to promote understanding, conservation, protection, restoration, science-based management, and sustainability of wetlands.’ SWS website.</p>	Feb. 2021	https://www.sws.org/
<p>Stichting Mission Lanka ‘The Mission Lanka Foundation (SML) is committed to human rights for young and old in Srilanka. Simply because in that beautiful country not everyone is allowed to express his or her opinion in freedom and without risk. Whether you can follow a self-chosen lifestyle. SML wants to make this problem known and contribute to peaceful solutions. Because we believe in freedom and because we are convinced that talking to each other has more effect than fighting each other.’ SML website.</p>	Feb. 2021	http://stichtingmissionlanka.org/
<p>Virginia Community Rights Network ‘Protecting Rights of Nature, Advancing Local Self-Government. We recognize our interdependence, responsibilities, and obligations for maintaining a balance with Nature.’ Virginia Community Rights Network website.</p>	Feb. 2021	https://vacommunityrights.org/
<p>Water Culture Institute ‘Water Culture Institute is committed to forging a new relationship between people and water that respects the rights and interests of both people and nature. Our premise is that cultural values and the health of water ecosystems are inextricably intertwined.</p>	May. 2021	https://www.waterculture.org/

Organisation	Endorsement date or website posting date	URL
As we settle into the new epoch of the Anthropocene, where humans have unbridled power to affect the natural world, we need to orient ourselves to the moral responsibilities which this power brings. The mission of Water Culture Institute is to clarify our moral responsibility to water and develop practical tools for applying ethics in water-related decision-making.' Water Culture Institute website.		
Wetlands International 'Wetlands International is a global not-for-profit with a mission to inspire and mobilise society to safeguard and restore wetlands for people and nature.' Wetlands International.	Feb. 2021	https://www.wetlands.org/
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (UK) 'We conserve, restore and create wetlands, and inspire everyone to value the amazing things healthy wetlands can do for us. WWT save critically endangered species from extinction, work with communities around the world who depend on wetlands and inspire people to take care of nature.' WWT website.	Dec. 2020	https://www.wwt.org.uk/# https://wli.wwt.org.uk/2020/12/proposing-a-declaration-of-universal-rights-for-wetlands/
Organisations posting articles to websites Community Environmental Legal Defence Fund (CELDF) 'At CELDF, we are not a typical environmental organization. We assist communities to develop first-in-the-nation, ground-breaking laws to protect rights, including worker, environmental, and democratic rights, and rights of nature. CELDF provides free and low-cost legal services, grassroots organizing, and education, to communities, states, and countries facing injustice.' CELDF website.	Dec. 2020	https://celdf.org/2020/12/celdf-endorses-universal-declaration-rights-of-wetlands/ https://celdf.org/2021/03/support-grows-for-rights-of-wetlands/
Earth Thrive (GARN Member) 'Non-governmental organization with charitable aims for the holistic approach to prevention and remediation of ecocides and establishment of Nature rights in the SE Europe/Balkans and Mediterranean regions. We are proud to announce that we are in the process of being accepted to the UN Harmony with Nature program as a knowledge expert.' EarthThrive website.	2 Feb. 2021 (WWD)	https://twitter.com/Earth_Thrive/status/1356693798957576194
East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership 'The East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership is a network of partners within the East Asian–Australasian Flyway (EAAF). The East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) aims to protect migratory waterbirds, their habitat and the livelihoods of people dependent upon them. The Flyway is one of 9 major migratory routes recognised globally. Partners include National Governments, Inter-Governmental Organisations, International Non-governmental Organisations, and International Private Enterprise, which agree to endorse the text and support the objectives and actions under this Partnership.' EAAFP website.	Dec. 2020	https://www.eaaflyway.net/universal-declaration-of-the-rights-of-wetlands/
Fundacion Munecito 'Mission: generate actions and reflections in favour of the environment; of the mount and Andean wetlands in particular. With particular emphasis on strengthening governance contribute to Lake Tota. Vision: our NGO seeks to see territories as increasingly sustainable and harmonious living spaces in the man-nature relationship, with better levels of human formation, environmental culture and appropriation of ancestral values, contributing to this with its own example and the development of related projects.' Fundacion Munecito website. Interview on banks of Lake Tota, Colombia with Indigenous Mamo (leading figure) Roseliano, of the Kankuamo group in Colombia.	Dec. 2020	http://blog.fundacionmontecito.org/2020/12/proponiendo-una-declaracion-de-derechos.html https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZ2Fz-7FvZQ&feature=youtu.be http://blog.fundacionmontecito.org/2021/02/mamo-kankuamo-en-lago-de-tota.html
GARN Europe (European Rights of Nature Hub) 'A Europe wide movement working on introducing, establishing and respecting Rights of Nature in law, in work, in life.' GARN Europe website.	2 Feb. 2021 (WWD)	https://twitter.com/GARN_EUROPE/status/1356686748781318144
Member of European Parliament Toussaint's Office M. E. P. Toussaint email Newsletter dated 2 May 2021.	2 Feb. 2021 (WWD)	https://twitter.com/marietouss1/status/1356530502103162882 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/97236/MARIE_TOUSSAINT/home
National Geographic (NG) NG online magazine article cites MFR Towards a Declaration of the Rights of Wetlands article and quotes Max Finlayson.	2 Feb. 2021 (WWD)	https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2021/02/world-wetlands-are-slipping-away-agusan-marsh-underscores-stakes/

Organisation	Endorsement date or website posting date	URL
<p>Reserva Natural Xieti, Lago de Tota ‘The Xieti Nature Reserve is a high-Andean refuge on the shores of Lake Tota, a conservation and restoration space in which we promote environmental culture, wetland tourism, and provide accommodation. It represents a family commitment to support the efforts of sustainability and ecological harmony in the Lake Tota basin. It is administered by the Montecito Foundation, an NGO founded in 2010, and since then committed to strengthening governance in this territory.’ Reserva Natural Xieti website.</p>	Feb. 2021	https://www.facebook.com/rn.xieti/
<p>Wetlands International ‘Wetlands International is a global not-for-profit with a mission to inspire and mobilise society to safeguard and restore wetlands for people and nature.’ Wetlands International.</p>	17 Feb. 2021	https://www.wetlands.org/news/supporting-a-universal-declaration-of-the-rights-of-wetlands/
<p>Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (UK) ‘We conserve, restore and create wetlands, and inspire everyone to value the amazing things healthy wetlands can do for us. WWT saves critically endangered species from extinction, work with communities around the world who depend on wetlands and inspire people to take care of nature.’ WWT website.</p>	Dec. 2020	https://wli.wwt.org.uk/2020/12/proposing-a-declaration-of-universal-rights-for-wetlands/