



MEGA-BASINS TOUR

In preparation for the mobilization from July 16th to 21st, 2024,
in the Poitou region of France

Who are we ?



BASSINES NON MERCI

Informal collective:

- fighting against the construction of mega-basins,
- very active in Poitou region
- made up of citizens, and dozens of organizations (associations, unions, political parties, etc).



A united common front since August 2021



LES SOULÈVEMENTS DE LA TERRE

A composition of heterogeneous forces at the crossroads of :

- protesting territories
- the environmentalist movement
- farmers' unionism
- youth in revolt

LES SOULÈVEMENTS DE LA TERRE (SDT) = "THE UPRISINGS OF THE EARTH" : a heterogeneous composition of forces at the crossroads of protesting territories, the environmentalist movement, farmers' unionism, youth in revolt. But also: farms, collectives, agricultural associations and activists from diverse backgrounds. We came together in January 2021 to face up to various alarming realities and find ways of acting together, breaking out of our respective isolations and sharing our experiences and practices of struggle. Our struggles are rooted in our imaginations, but often too atomized, diffuse and therefore invisible, and difficult, if not impossible, to join.

Our main objectives:

- Precipitate a meeting between farmers and the climate movement, territorial struggles and youth in revolt.
- Build a national force of calling and action (to start with)
- Organize nationwide action campaigns with two main objectives: reclaim land coveted by our adversaries, and obstruct, dismantle and disarm the industries that are devouring our territories.

BASSINES NON MERCI (BNM) = "BASINS NO THANK YOU" :

Very active informal citizens' collective

Composed of :

- Citizens
- Environmental protection associations (such as the APIEEE, NE17, the LPO, SOS Rivières & Environnement, etc.)
- Trade unions (such as the Confédération Paysanne, the CGT, Solidaires, the FSU)

- Political parties (such as France Insoumise, EELV, the NPA, the PCF) who have been working together for several years to denounce and stop mega-basins projects.

and currently more than 150 organizations supporting mobilizations against mega-basins
=> Gathering a diversity of people around this struggle (from local to international)

<https://bassines-nonmerci.fr/index.php/2023/01/12/25-mars-pas-une-bassine-de-plus-mobilisation-internationale-pour-la-defense-de-leau/>

BNM & SDT meeting:

August 2021, after the first season, we are more than 100 people getting together to talk for three days. This is what we call the interlude of the uprisings.

- Actions and struggles for season 2 will be decided there.
- Besieging Monsanto, but also reclaiming land against land grabbing in the Jura, fighting against the "Grand Paris" project and... mega-basins of course.
- That's when we began to understand what the basins are and why it's urgent to stop building them now.
- While the struggle already has an echo beyond the Poitevin marsh, when they come to the SDT it's to give greater scope and greater combativity to oppose the installation of 90 new basins in the next two years, and thousands across the territory, when work on the Mauzé-sur-le-Mignon basin begins in September 2021.

What is a mega-basin?



- Craters up to 20 hectares in size and 10 meters high, fully plasticized
- Mega-basins are not filled by rainwater
- They pump directly from the groundwater table and from river in winter
- They are 70% subsidized by public money (which represents over €75 million in total)



- Mega-basins are water storage structures that look like plastic craters. They are equipped with 10-meter-high dikes, built from excavated earth (up to 8 m deep).
 - Their average size is 10 hectares, and can extend up to 20 hectares.
 - The Sainte-Soline basin that can hold 628,000 m³ of water, is equivalent to 250 Olympic-size swimming pools.
 - Unlike what mega-basins promoters, including the government, keep repeating over and over again, mega-basins are mainly filled by pumping from groundwater (but also from rivers).
 - It's not a question of recovering water that “falls from the sky”, but of extracting water from its natural storage spaces. Nor are they filled with run-off water (e.g. from floods) like hillside reservoirs.
 - Due to over-irrigation, water tables often drop too low in winter for effective pumping, even though the permitted levels are already minimal. The real issue at hand is the sustainability of intensive irrigation practices.
 - The prefectures grant derogations every year to extract even more water.
 - They are 70% subsidized by public money (over €75 million presently), mainly via the Loire Bretagne Water Agency (AELB) (50% of aid).
- This public funding is normally conditional on commitments to reduce pesticide use by beneficiaries. But, in practice, this is not the case (see independent report by the AELB report: : <https://agence.eau-loire-bretagne.fr/files/live/mounts/midas/Donnees-et-documents/Evaluations/Bilan%20des%20engagements%20in>)

What is a mega-basin?



Vidéo d'une minute : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8KEa7J3tKQ>

Mega-basins feed agro-industry, not human beings

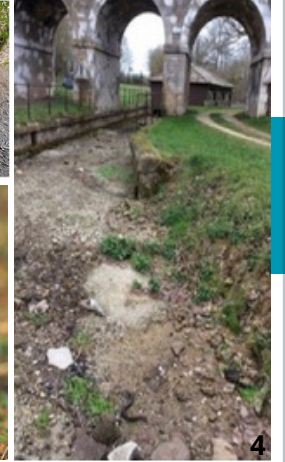


- They benefit only 5% of the farms in France.
- They were invented to maintain intensive production agriculture alive, with corn monocultures and animal battery-farms. They feed large-scale farms serving a mainly export-oriented model that does not contribute to food sovereignty.
- They are inadequate summer crops, requiring ever more water when it is least available.
- They are crops fed by chemical inputs sold by Monsanto and others.

- Mega-basins are part of the history of irrigation, all the more so of the intensive irrigation that began to develop in France in the 70s and 80s.
 - Mega-basins are a continuation of 40 years of headlong rush to drain wetlands and expand agricultural land.
 - They are a band-aid for an agriculture that has reached the end of its tether and has already pumped too much water from the aquifers, largely to feed corn monocultures and intensive livestock farming.
 - Corn was imported in the 50s via hybrid seeds from the USA, notably by Monsanto, but also today by Bayer or Pioneer (champions of GMOs).
 - Corn is unsuited to our regions because, unlike other crops (such as sorghum or alfalfa), it must be irrigated in summer. It is kept alive by the chemical inputs, roundup and glyphosate, that the same companies (Monsanto/Bayer...), sell to farmers.
 - 70% of the former Poitou-Charentes region's cereals are exported via the port of La Rochelle (Profits, export et grandes cultures : les vraies raisons des mégabassines (reporterre.net)). The port's development is closely linked to that of the cereal industry.
 - Mega-basins supply water to large-scale farms that serve a predominantly export-oriented model that does not contribute to food sovereignty.
 - The development of these facilities has also led to speculation in land prices, making access to land increasingly difficult and preventing the establishment of new farmers
 - So, fighting the industrial model defended by the basins goes hand in hand with attacking the multinationals that support it. It's a single gesture targeting different links in the same industry.

What consequences ?

- Resources are overexploited
- Rivers dry up more than half the year
- Ecosystems are destroyed (wetlands, loss of biodiversity, artificialization of land, etc.)
- Inequitable water sharing and drinking water supply problems
- Degradation of water quality (linked to synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, eutrophication of water, etc.)



- In the Poitevin marsh, France's second-largest wetland, hundreds of kilometers of rivers are turned into paths every year for months on end.
 - In the Deux-Sèvres department : 1,000 km of the 2,700 km of watercourses are dry (summer 20 22).
 - Rivers and aquifers have lost 20% of their flow and volume over the last 20 years. The coming years will be no better!
 - Winter droughts: (Photo bottom right taken in February 2017 at Lusseray. The same thing happened in February 2018 on the Crépé).
 - Example of the Bourdet peat bog : increasingly dry, even though it's a protected area
 - Premature draining of the marsh, with consequences for biodiversity in spring and summer, particularly for bird populations such as the black tern.
 - The water pumped out in winter does not replenish the wetlands.
 - Yet these areas are replenished in winter to meet the needs of the natural environment. Without sufficient replenishment of wetlands and soils, many plant and animal species will be affected. In other words, all biodiversity is endangered by these mega-basins.
- => Failure to preserve the environment
- Lowland birds (Great Bustard and gross edicnema). The CNPN (National Council for the Protection of Nature) referred the matter to itself, as it should have been consulted on the Sainte-Soline basin project, which is located in a special protection area for the Bustard. It confirmed that there are real direct impacts on nesting birds, including the Bustard, starting with the “disturbance and frightening” factor associated with the works.
 - Loss of aquatic biodiversity
 - Drinking water is becoming increasingly polluted and scarce: the departments of

Charente-Maritime, Vendée and Deux-Sèvres have been rejected several times by Europe for the poor quality of their drinking water.

Why act now ?

- The aim is to extend these projects to the whole of France.
- 93 of these mega-basins are planned in the Poitou region over the next 2 years
- A thousand are planned in France within the decade
- In the department 79 of France, work on the first mega-basin at Mauzé-sur-le-Mignon is complete, those of Sainte-Soline and Priaires are underway, and the one of Epannes has just started !

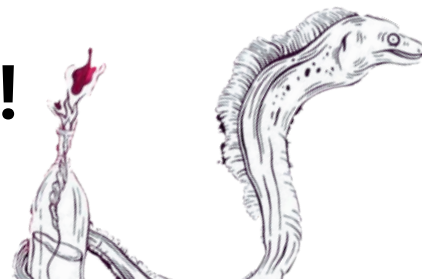


- 93 of these mega-basins are planned in the Poitou region within the next 2 years, 16 in the Poitevin marsh

• but this is just the beginning! These water storage projects will be extended to the whole of France. In January 2024, Fesneau (minister of agriculture) announced that a law to simplify administrative procedures for farmers could be passed in the spring. Fesneau also announced the launch of a “hydraulic fund” to follow on from the government's “water plan”, providing 20 million euros in aid.

- Work on the first basin has been completed: the Mauzé-sur-le-Mignon basin, whose site was invaded by hundreds of people in September, is now in use.
- 2 other worksites are underway:
 - Priaires, which is the subject of an administrative appeal following conflicts of interest involving the project promoters, which led to the suspension of work.
 - Sainte-Soline, where work has begun despite the fact that no derogation has been requested from the CNPN by the project promoters or the Prefecture, even though this is mandatory in a protected area (in this case, the project is located in a Bustard protection zone).

Reviving past actions !



**Not one basin more !
Not here, not
anywhere !**



Since September 2021, a united front has been gaining strength to halt mega-basin projects.

2021

September, the 21st

Construction shutdown!

- A tractor convoy takes the road to Niort
- 750 people for the Gathering-Banquet in Niort
- Invasion of the construction site with people and animals
- A machine is repainted
- the PSIG (specialized units of the French Gendarmerie Nationale) is pushed back



November, the 6th

Taking the basin!

- Great mobilization with more than 4,000 people present and 20 tractors!
- One of the pumps feeding the illegal Cramchaban basin is dismantled by farmers
- Demonstrators invade the basin and collectively dismantle it
- A full and resounding victory, a demonstration of strength that we are a people's movement, fighting in large numbers for a socially and ecologically just society.





March, the 25/26/27th

2022

Maraichin Spring

- 7,000 people at La Rochénard
- Disarming the supply network for the future basin in Epannes, which will draw water to the detriment of the drinking water needs of Vallans residents.
- Prefectural bans did not mar the unprecedented scale and determination of this gathering



October, the 29/30th **Not one basin more !**
Sainte-Soline #1

- Large-scale mobilization, with over 8,000 opponents and 150 organizations succeeding in gaining access to the biggest basin construction site currently underway
- 3 processions managed to successively overtake and pass numerous police lines and roadblocks
- Worksite at a standstill for ten days
- On Sunday, the pipes feeding the Sainte-Soline basin were disarmed by a thousand opponents



March, the 24/25/26th

2023

Sainte-Soline #2

- 30,000 demonstrators from all over France and beyond
- Fierce repression by the police, with 200 injured, 40 of them seriously, and 2 people in comas with life-threatening conditions
- Attempt by Interior Minister Darmanin to dissolve the SDT, sparking incredible solidarity and the creation of 200 local committees

July, from the 18th to the 24th

Water Convoy

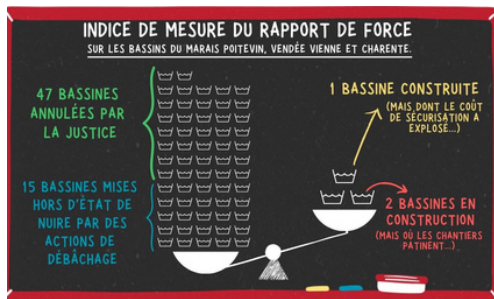
- 700 bikes and dozens of tractors set off from the outskirts of Sainte-Soline to reach the Loire-Bretagne Water Agency, in several stages, to denounce the basin industry

September, the 8th and November, the 28th

"Justice for Water" trial

- 3000 people, 4 trade unions (Confédération paysanne, CGT, Solidaires and FSU), alongside political organizations, associations and activists, expressed their unwavering support for the 9 defendants and their collective commitment to defending freedoms and water as a common good

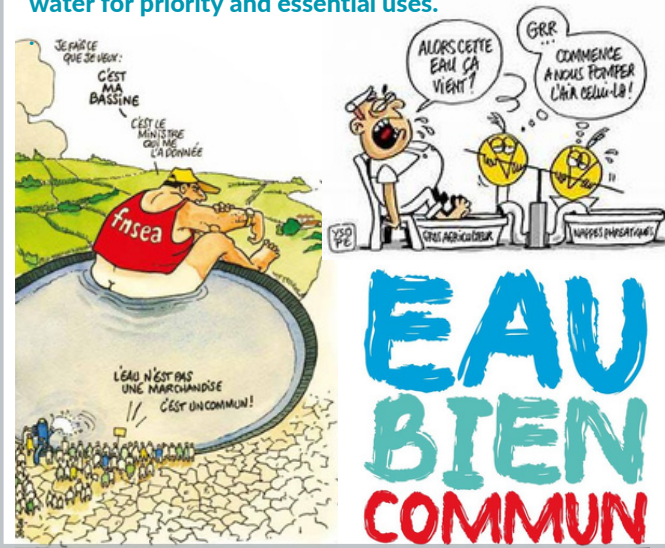
What also happened during those 3 years !



- Legal action to cancel 16 basin projects in the Deux-Sèvres department
- 47 basins canceled by the administrative court in the Poitou region
- 15 basins disarmed in the Poitou region
- Tribunes of support (200 personalities + 65 scientists in rebellion)
- Counter-expertise of BRGM (Geological and Mining Research Bureau) study by the hydrogeologist Anne-Morwenn Pastier
- Decree dissolving SDT canceled
- 210 local SDT committees and 158,485 people declared their support for the SDT

What we want !

For our organizations and movements, a victory means the end of mega-basins and a return to collective, democratic water management that protects and shares water for priority and essential uses.



- An immediate end to mega-basin projects and a halt to all work underway
- Support for farmers in the implementation of farming practices that retain water in the soil and keep irrigation requirements to a minimum
- Unlike current practice, the establishment of Territory Projects for Water Management (PTGE) free from the control of irrigators. The PTGE is not limited to agricultural uses of water, but covers all these uses, and even prioritizes the search for solutions to limit negative impacts on the resource
- We are calling for a prioritization of water uses towards animal watering and agricultural production that relocates food supplies and promotes agricultural employment, particularly in market gardening
- This prioritization must be accompanied by a radical reform of irrigation volume allocation systems. For all existing or future water consumptions, the volume granted must be capped according to the number of assets on the farm and the type of production. Ceilings must be determined at local level, according to the soil, climate and hydrogeological conditions of the area, and in line with water-saving practices

Next mobilization from the 16th to the 21st of July

2024



- **15-17:** Autonomous convoys to denounce the Basin system (agro-industry, financiers, impact on the environment, etc.)
- **16-21:** A village to meet, show solidarity, prepare, act and build the future of our struggles
- **19-20:** Large-scale demonstrations and concerts on Saturday evening

At a time when :

- legal victories are piling up,
- actions in the field continue,
- mobilizations are growing and collectives are being formed everywhere
- the scientific world has proven the unsuitability of these projects regarding global warming

**LET'S PUT AN END TO MEGA-BASINS AND GET OUT
IN FORCE THIS SUMMER IN THE POITOU REGION**

STOP MEGA-BASINS



Teaser Video

STOP MEGA-BASINS

International mobilization from July 16 to 21, 2024

PRE-PROGRAM

WATER VILLAGE

Throughout the week at the water village, participate in:

- Activist training: care, legal, protest techniques, ...
- Meetings, film screenings, and workshops on 'basins', agro-industry, extraction, river and soil life...
- Assemblies of collectives fighting against toxic industries: factory farms, concrete industry, logistics warehouses, high-speed networks, quarries...
- Collective support workshops for agricultural installation
- Storytelling walks, naturalistic and landscape walks
- Information booths from activist, associative, trade union, and political organizations
- Meeting for a planetary alliance of watersheds (Wednesday and Thursday by registration)
- Childcare with a space for families and childcare times

ROUND TABLES

with local and international guests

TUESDAY 16/07

WATER, QUALITY, QUANTITY: STATE OF AFFAIRS AND TRANSCONTINENTAL RESISTANCE

Morning: Water quality and agriculture: from groundwater pollution to regenerative hydrology

Afternoon: Drought and water grabbing policies: impacts and uprisings in Spain and Latin America

THE EVENING

- EVENING: TALES AND STORIES EVENING

WEDNESDAY 17/07

ORGANIZING FOR WATER AND LAND SHARING AT THE SCALE OF A WATERSHED

Morning: Water sharing, agri-tech, and resistance in the Jordan River Basin (Middle East)

Afternoon: Large dams: ending these weapons of domination. Stories of uprisings, dismantling, and Castor operations

THE EVENING

- CONCERT: Bossygn (experimental music, blue jazz oriental rock), Zz and Z (super crazy rock)
- CABARET QUEER with Tata band.e and Cabaret Bad Bitch

THURSDAY 18/07

DISARMING MEGA-BASINS. OPENING A BREACH IN THE AGRO-INDUSTRIAL MODEL

Morning: Piercing the mega-basin and its supply chain. Our counter-expertises

Afternoon: Global agricultural market and peasant revolts: what perspectives for agriculture?

IN THE EVENING

- TRADITIONAL DANCE: Clac boum (neo-trad' from Poltoui), Clume (polyphonic dance songs)
- CONCERT: Eustache Mc Queer (lyrical electro-pop) - DJ's

FRIDAY 19/07

PROTEST ACTIONS

THE EVENING

- CONCERT: Johnny Montreal (rock'n'roll), Billie Brolek (trap, Ultra-Moderne (tomist electro punk))

SATURDAY 20/07

PROTEST ACTIONS

THE EVENING

- CONCERT: Orchestre tout puissant Marcel Duchamp (jazz-punk-afro-beat-fantara-trance), Lo Barrat (Occitan polyphonic songs), Beat Bouet Trio (Trad/Rap-Raggae)
- CABARET: Le grand zanimo (popular animal-themed ball) - Dance Floor and DJ's sets

SUNDAY 21/07

BUILDING COMMON PERSPECTIVES

Morning: Social security of food, alternative agricultural chamber, community water management: avenues for developing a peasant, nourishing, and sustainable agriculture

Afternoon: Declaration for a planetary alliance and grand assembly of water movements

To support the struggle:
<https://www.hellbasins.com/association/association-pour-la-defense-des-larres/forums/14>

+ More info: hellbasins@proton.me www.facebook.com/hellbasins www.instagram.com/hellbasins www.youtube.com/channel/UC...

<https://youtu.be/J5CUEMzbTKo>



PRACTICAL INFORMATION



**High naturalistic and groundwater protection stakes,
very low impact required on site**



**Use natural,
eco-friendly hygiene products**



Take your reusable cup



No swimming on site



No dogs on site



**No car camping on the village site,
trucks will be parked a few
kilometers away from the site**

ALL THE INFORMATION



Facebook

[Facebook BNM](#)

[Facebook SDT](#)



Site

bassinesnonmerci.fr
lessoulevementsdelaterre.org



Twitter

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