

From Global to Planetary – Bob Hamblett

Stuart Brand's essay [Elements of a Durable Civilisation](#) asks us to regard such biosphere entities as forests and rivers as Infrastructure of a hybrid kind. A river catchment is no longer pristine (pre-industrial), but overlaid with the apparatus of the water companies, which is what companies such as Global Infrastructure Partners recognise/monetise. This year GIS was taken over by Black Rock, which has over \$10 trn of assets under management. Its *utilities, infrastructure and power opportunities* trust fund made an 11.44% return – meaning there's a lot of money investors are taking out (profits). Keir Starmer is a fan. Growth, he believes "Can only be achieved by working in partnership with leading businesses like BlackRock." The Chinese model is for the government to tell corporations what to do. The western model is the other way round (for businesses to tell government what they *can* do).

A key to Stuart Brand's way of thinking is for the adjective 'Global' (re-active) to be replaced by 'Planetary' (pro-active). This is liberating. Those well-intentioned technocrats (of the near future) pulling the levers of power should manage the hybrid infrastructure with the aim, not of restoring it to its primitive state, but, in preserving some form of civilisation, we should devise means of healing the infrastructure to the benefit of its all its components (stakeholders), including the humans. This is the aim, I believe, of the Brit Catchment Natural Flood Management Plan.

We can't assume everything governments do is wrong. BCNMP is only possible by changes Michael Gove made under the previous regime. There are government funds that can be tapped.

At the grass roots the job of activists and NGOs is to mobilise community action. To light the spark we need to break through the addictions of poisonous media. So we need to be proficient in hitting the buttons of the uninvolved. One effective tool is [Kama Muta](#) – the emotion you didn't have a name for. It's when you're moved to tears by an act of compassion, or are overwhelmed by awesome Nature or some historical turning point. Kittens? A song? Other methods welcome. No holds barred.

But hard facts too need to enter the public realm. At the Dorset Coast Forum annual conference in October the theme was (to paraphrase): Breaking the bad news to coastal communities about the impacts of climate change. It's HERE and it's NOW. To quote Dave Picksley, Senior Coastal Advisor, Environment Agency: "Along the Dorset coast 6,000 properties are currently at risk. With sea level rise, that figure is multiplied by three. *There is NO funding for asset maintenance.*" His colleague Alan Frampton spoke very rapidly and quietly of a "HEDGEHOG IN THE HEADLIGHTS WITH EYES WIDE OPEN BUT NO WAY OF GETTING OUT OF THE WAY." The significant thing here is they are not wild-eyed activists but bureaucrats. It should be noted that Shoreline Management Plans for towns and harbours do have (inadequate?) money spent on them.

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