



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Award Winning Environmental Innovators to Speak at Omega's Water of Life Conference**

### *Exploring Challenges & Opportunities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

RHINEBECK, NY –Omega Institute, in an effort to find lasting solutions to the global freshwater resource crisis, today announced it will hold The Water of Life conference October 24-26<sup>th</sup> on its Rhinebeck campus. Leading environmental speakers such as Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Maude Barlow, John Todd, and many others will discuss the global water crisis and what can be done to protect this vital and irreplaceable resource.

“We are living in a time when the lack of fresh, clean water is not just a problem for the developing world, but a problem we all face throughout the globe,” said Skip Backus, executive director at Omega Institute. “With UN experts warning of this profound crisis, Omega Institute is seeking to better understand how we’ve reached this predicament, and ultimately what can be done about it.”

A key component of the gathering will be to share best practices that have emerged as a result of the challenges and opportunities Omega has experienced in its effort to build the first LEED Platinum, Living Building Challenge certified building in the United States. Last November during the Greenbuild conference in Chicago, Omega received the “On the Boards” award for a design plan that achieved the highest green building standards in the trade.

The building, known as the Omega Center for Sustainable Living (OCSL), will be a state-of-the-art environmental center containing an Eco Machine™, an energy-efficient, self-sustaining wastewater treatment process, designed by ecological engineer Todd, who will be speaking at the conference. Todd recently won the prestigious Buckminster Fuller Challenge Award for his work on *Comprehensive Design for a Carbon Neutral World*.

In addition to the esteemed presenters, representatives and scholarship recipients from a wide range of national and regional organizations committed to working on the environment at all levels will attend the conference. The conference is open to all who are concerned about our freshwater resources, and is especially of interest to policymakers, environmental activists, corporate executives, elected officials, students, and teachers.

To register please visit, [eOmega.org](http://eOmega.org) or call 800.944.1001. A limited number of media passes are available. Please contact Chrissa Pullicino at 845.266.4444, ext. 233 if you would like to cover the event.

## **Keynote Speakers:**

**Robert F. Kennedy Jr.**, is senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, chief prosecuting attorney for the Hudson Riverkeeper, and president of Waterkeeper Alliance. He was recently named one of *Time* magazine's "Heroes for the Planet" for his success in helping Riverkeeper lead the fight to restore the Hudson River.

**John Todd** is one of the pioneers in the emerging field of ecological design and engineering. Developer of the Eco Machine™, Todd was named one of the 20th Century's top 35 inventors by the Lemelson-MIT Program for Invention and Innovation. He was named a "Hero of the Earth" by *Time* magazine in 1999. [toddecological.com](http://toddecological.com)

**Maude Barlow** is the national chairperson of the Council of Canadians, Canada's largest public advocacy organization, and the founder of the Blue Planet Project, working internationally for public access to freshwater. She is the recipient of the 2005 Right Livelihood Award (known as the "Alternative Nobel"), is the author or coauthor of 16 books, and is working on a new book about the global fight for the right to water titled *Blue Covenant*.

**Ned Sullivan** is president of Scenic Hudson, a nonprofit that works to protect and restore the Hudson River and its majestic landscape as an irreplaceable national treasure and a vital resource for residents and visitors.

**Alex Matthiessen** is president of Riverkeeper, a nonprofit whose mission is to protect the environmental, recreational, and commercial integrity of the Hudson River and its tributaries, and to safeguard New York City's and Westchester County's drinking water supply.

**Wenonah Hauter** is executive director of the consumer group Food & Water Watch, which challenges the corporate control and abuse of food and water resources. She was one of the first environmental leaders to identify water privatization as an emerging issue in the late 1990s and has been one of the main campaign strategists for keeping water services public. [foodandwaterwatch.org](http://foodandwaterwatch.org)

## **About Omega Institute for Holistic Studies**

*Founded in 1977, Omega Institute for Holistic Studies is the nation's most trusted source for wellness and personal growth. As a nonprofit organization, Omega offers diverse and innovative educational experiences that inspire an integrated approach to personal and social change. Located on 195 acres in the beautiful Hudson Valley, Omega welcomes more than 23,000 people to its workshops, conferences, and retreats in Rhinebeck, New York and at exceptional locations around the world. eOmega.org*

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