BOOK REVIEW

What to do about our national water crisis

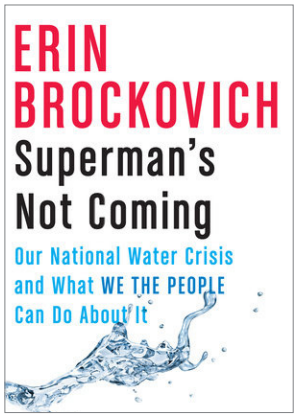
by **Bopaiah Biddanda**

Environmental activist Erin Brockovich's latest book is an inspiring personal narrative about the drinking water crisis facing America and what you and I can do about it. With people causing more and more water pollution, the resulting scarcity of clean drinking water is an emerging challenge that will soon take center stage in the context of a changing climate. Thus, lessons contained in this book are most timely. As the title says, Superman's not coming; instead, we will have to fight our own fights.

Over the years and across the country—from Hinkley, California, (chromium-6, 1991) to Flint, Michigan (lead, 2014)—most Americans have imbibed unsafe drinking water, and all have been exposed to "forever chemicals" like PFCs (perfluorinated chemicals). Today, the top six toxins in our surface and groundwater are chromium-6, chloromines, lead, PFCs, fracking chemical cocktails, and trichloroethylene solvents. As human activity continues to contaminate the environment (often with new synthetic compounds with unknown effects) and deplete water reserves (often concentrating the very same contaminants), regulatory agencies and legislation aimed to protect the environment are only playing catch up in safeguarding our air, water, and soil. But citizen science and activism can make a difference.

Among the many practical steps Brockovich recommends is for people to contribute to a national self-reporting registry of water crisis hot-spots—a living map of current trouble spots—on the Community Healthbook website. Other engaged citizens can then take up the issue at local, state, and national levels to collectively make a difference.

While Superman may not be coming, Brokovich calls us to action and shows us the way forward. Her book is a must read for all who wish to advocate for the health of their neighborhoods and watersheds.



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