

Michael Stanley Gallisdorfer

holds a Ph.D. in Physical Geography and builds upon a unique (and multidisciplinary!) skill set, making him a

Global Water expert.

(DON'T!)
**WASTE
WATER**

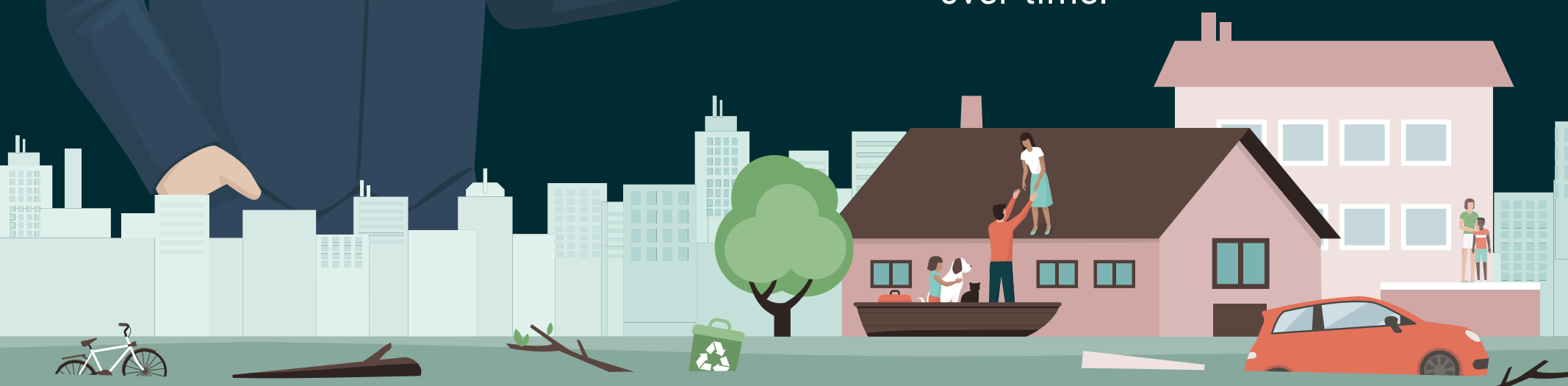
I look at what water does, how we relate to water, and how we can maximize its value for people in cities!

Cities grow at the confluence of commercial and human routes. And since the early Sumerian ages, water belongs to this confluence.

As a route, but not only.

Many rivers provided food for people, so people grew up and built their homes and did business where they were close to food!

That came at the cost of flooding risk. So for centuries, we've avoided building in flood plains but... somehow forgot it over time.



(DON'T!)

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This eternal story of mankind and its unfounded certainty to be stronger than nature.

We built those large-scale mega engineering projects for flood control and retention. That works, but there's a lot of costs: losing the ecosystem services, simplifying the river system, and disconnecting it from its flood plain.

So for centuries, we've been hiding the rivers under concrete layers. (It was also convenient to use them as sewers)

But we lost the dynamism of the rivers. Their ability to refresh and restore the land, to return it to life. That's what we lost in cities too!

That concept has a name,

urban stream deserts:

Aka, a lack of access to a restorative blue water landscape.

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A river doesn't just refresh a flood plain; it refreshes the mind!

That's probably why we've seen worldwide a movement tending to bring rivers back in cities.

And actually, there are good economic reasons for that too!



Studies carried out by the University of Michigan found that it adds \$4 for every \$1 spent on river restoration work to the economy in cities like Buffalo and Detroit.



Restoring rivers in cities comes with business development.

It touches tourism and recreational benefits, but also land value and public health, which carries its own irony:

We used to cover up rivers in cities to improve public health. Now we're uncovering and restoring them to improve public health because people feel better around rivers!



(DON'T!)

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The Cheonggyecheon stream restoration Case Study in Seoul actually offers documented proof of this.



And last but not least, river restoration comes with its environmental benefits.

Alluvium deposits enable biogeochemical processes, and nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen are fixed in the river's ecosystem.



There's a lot to uncover in this week's episode, such as:

- The perks and pitfalls of semi-natural ecosystems in the heart of cities
- How 60s 'urbanization miracles' became modern nightmares
- The three new and updated reasons why people want to go to cities (and why that matter for businesses)
- The blue-green movement that changes the way we do economy
- How better technical understanding and digitization enables to engineer with nature
- How Sponge Cities are a new level of urbanization and environmental engineering, although still being a vivid debate in society
- How involvement of all stakeholders is crucial to building a blue-green infrastructure
- How cognitive connectivity needs to be restored along with water rehabilitation (and how that connects to... Heidegger!)
- How water needs to be presented in a fun and lively way instead of focusing on the negative reconnection
- Why and how a 'Water Incubator' could turn the tables

... and more than ever, much more!

Dive in this week's interview with Michael; check it out on dww.show!