The Blue River of Ourplace flows south from its headwaters in the Green Mountains, watering the arid lands of the nation’s central plateau.

Traditional Communities and Cultures of Ourplace

Two groups of aboriginal peoples of Ourplace live along the Blue River.

The **Highlanders**, who traditionally live by hunting and fishing in the highlands headwaters;

The **Valley folk**, traditional irrigators, who live on and cultivate the Blue River’s downstream floodplain above its confluence with the great Negris River at the border of Ourplace.

Other communities have settled in the Blue River valley:

The **Gallegos**, an agricultural/mercantile empire from north of the Green Mountains, colonized Ourplace in the 15th century, building villages, irrigation systems, and churches.

For centuries the Gallegos, the Highlanders and the Valley folk were intermittently at war. Between wars, there were periods of peace and intermarriage. Each community changed, adopting aspects of the others’ culture and religion. Today, they are distinct groups with distinct languages, but with much in common.

### Nineteenth Century

In the 19th century, an emerging eastern power, WalMark, established a military base in Ourplace to support its activities south of the Negris River. Initially, few Marks (as the WalMarkians are called) settled in Ourplace, but eventually the community of BigTown grew up around the base. Life among the Gallegos, the Highlanders and the Valley folk went on as before, except that the wars between them virtually ceased, as all three groups focused on their relations with the Marks.

Coal mining became important in Ourplace in the 19th century.

### 1898 Agreement

Relationships among the four peoples of Ourplace gradually formalized, coalescing in 1898 in an Agreement among Ourplace’s four sovereign cultural groups:

**Highlander Reserve:** In response to the frequent confrontations between the Highlanders and any members of the other three groups who came into the northern region to hunt or fish, Highlander territorial boundaries were set. These boundaries, while considerably smaller than the original Highlander territories, nevertheless set apart a significant area of Ourplace within which the Marks, Gallegos, and Valley People agreed not to settle or develop resources. The Agreement excepted the existing community of Coalville and the Walmark coal mines in its environs; non-Highlanders’ property rights in these areas were affirmed. Both irrigators and industrialists among the...
downstream communities hoped the 1898 Agreement would allow for the building of reservoirs on the Blue River’s northern tributaries, but a consensus could not be reached and the Agreement is silent on this point.

**Valleyfolk Reserve:** The Agreement includes a blanket confirmation of indigenous interests in the lands irrigated by the Valley folk, designated the Valleyfolk Reserve, and recognition of the boundaries of the Reserve, as well as the traditional government of Valley City by the Valley folk councils of elders. The Valley folk, being farthest downstream, are most likely to find themselves water-short in times of drought or as demand for water grows. They therefore have a strong interest in introducing universally-recognized principles of water sharing into the Agreement to protect their supply. While no consensus was reached in 1898, acceptance of such principles continues to be a central goal of the Valley folk.

**Gallegos Irrigation District (GID):** The 185,000 hectares irrigated by the Gallegos community were recognized as the Gallegos Irrigation District (GID). The elected board of the GID has the power to levy assessments on irrigators and other governmental powers of a resource-management nature. The town of New Galicia is governed by a popularly-elected council, of which most, but not all, members are Gallegos. The Gallegos community is interested in establishing water storage on the upstream tributaries of the Blue River for Gallegos irrigation. To some extent this faction is joined by the downstream Valley folk.

**BigTown:** The Agreement acknowledges the principal Walmark settlement, BigTown, as a government under the laws and practices prevailing in Walmark. All BigTown residents with a high school diploma may vote for members of the BigTown Council. The result is that the Marks hold a majority of the seats on the BigTown Council. The BigTown industrialists have long sought the right to build reservoirs on the upstream tributaries of the Blue River for industrial hydropower, coal slurries, and to secure municipal supplies.

**Emergence of LOVE**

During the first decades of the 20th century an environmental preservation movement sprang up in Ourplace. This committed group arose initially among the Marks. Environmentalist principles and concepts—protection of all living creatures and ecosystems, a goal of living within the renewable resource budget, and opposition to
contamination of Ourplace’s rivers and lands—spread quickly to the Highlanders, Gallegos and Valley folk. A loose organization was formed in 1923—Leave Ourplace’s Virgin Ecosystems (LOVE)—which published a newsletter and held an annual conference.

LOVE’s objectives have support from both urban and rural elements, as well as from all of the cultural communities. However, being so diverse, LOVE is prey to internal tensions and distrust. If united, it might be the most powerful interest in Ourplace, but a good deal of its power is dissipated in conflicts among urban and rural elements and between cultural groups, not over whether Ourplace’s environment merits protection and preservation, but over how such measures should be implemented and by whom.

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**YOU ARE CHOSEN AS A DELEGATE TO THE OURPLACE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION!**

In 1927, the Valley folk asked for a referendum to be held throughout Ourplace on whether the region should become a single nation. The Gallegos, Highlanders and Valley folk as well as the Mark colonists overwhelmingly voted to form a unified independent government. A 10-year transition period was declared for the formation of the new government of Ourplace, and a Constitutional Convention with representatives from all social sectors will develop the legal and civic principles of the new nation.

The time is now 1928. The Marks, the Gallegos and the Valley folk are pressuring the Highlanders to allow reservoirs to be built on the Blue River’s upstream tributaries. The Highlanders are concerned about how these are built and used, how they will affect the fishing that is still important to the Highlander economy, and how much the reservoirs will encroach on their already-much-reduced homelands.

Nor are the three downstream groups of a single mind about upstream storage. The Gallegos want irrigation storage and are concerned that hydropower and coal development might diminish to the security and quality of their irrigation and domestic supplies. The Valley folk desperately need upstream storage, but are concerned about what upstream development will do to water quality. The Blue River is sacred to them, and they have already found that their seasonal ceremonials are celebrated in a river that is often dry and sediment-laden. Sometimes it is even full of chemicals from the BigTown industries.

And of course LOVE supporters are desperate to reverse the deterioration resulting from development, and to halt new development in the nearly-virgin Highlander region.

Each of the five major interest groups will be represented in the Constitutional Convention. On Day 1 the groups will caucus to develop a list of Constitutional concerns. The Constitutional Convention will be held on Day 3.
**Day 1 Constitutional Caucus Break-out Groups:**

You have been assigned to one of five break-out groups, one representing each of the: Highlanders, Gallegos, Marks, Valley Folk, and LOVE activists. Each of these interests will caucus during Day 1.

The purpose of the caucus is to develop a position(s) on rights and management of natural resources, particularly water, in Ourplace, in preparation for the upcoming Constitutional Convention. Please attempt to answer the following questions for your interest group (space is provided on the right for notes):

1. From your perspective, what inherent rights in water do you have as (Highlanders/Gallegos/Marks/Valley Folk/Environmentalists)? What is their basis? Do you see the rights of the other interests as similar or different?

2. What is the nature of these rights? (Are they rights to an amount, to sufficient water to accomplish a given purpose, to a share? What happens when there is not enough water to satisfy all inherent rights? How should these rights be adjusted as times change, new uses emerge, etc.?)

3. Who should make decisions on how the principles, once they are agreed upon, should be applied in particular situations? (An agency of the common government? A court? If so, who should sit on the court? A Council of Elders? If so, who should sit on the Council? A legislature? Some other body?)

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Look at your nametag to see which caucus you should attend:
- Green ......... Highlander
- Yellow ......... Valley Folk
- Blue ......... Gallegos
- Orange ......... Marks
- Red ............. LOVE