

## Higher authority: the state, public rights, and the „common good“ in late medieval resource management

### 51. Minisymposium des Zentrums für Umweltgeschichte eine gemeinsame Veranstaltung mit BOKU / Institut für Hydrobiologie

Vortrag:

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Environmental historians are familiar with medieval and early modern resource conflicts between rival lords or especially lords and commoners. But during late medieval centuries their local controversies over the right to determine uses were complicated by entry of a third party, the overlord, prince, or territorial state, into these affairs. Indeed nowadays the main struggle is between private (including corporate) claimants to resources and the regulatory efforts of state authorities. Most state intervention now asserts some higher purpose, whether economic development or protection of persons, properties, or the environment, to justify limiting or abrogating the actions and rights of others. Indeed since the twelfth century a rationale of the 'common good' (*utilitate commune, bien publique, gemeine nutz, etc.*) has been evoked to legitimize a wide range of measures taken by then newly reassertive monarchs, their successors, and their officers. This talk attends to the role of such ideological assertions in the extension of state control over notably non-arable resources during the later Middle Ages. As time permits it treats the establishment of self-declared public authority over woodlands by the French crown, south German princely states, and the Venetian republic; an effort at regional flood control by the autonomous county of Roussillon; and regulation of freshwater fisheries by the commune of Perugia, kings of France, Scottish monarchs and parliaments, and Austrian dukes. My intent is to explore shared patterns of rhetoric, approach, and implications social and ecological, while also indicating some variables and limits to governmental programs of resource management.

**Ort / Place:** IFF, 1070 Wien, Schottenfeldgasse 29

**Zeit / Time:** Donnerstag, 29. November 2012, 18.00 c.t. – 20.00 Uhr