

## **What is Permaculture?**

*Permaculture design techniques result in ecologically sound and economically profitable environments for home, business and community.*

1. An ecological science - the study of nature and natural systems
2. Whole System Design strategies for self-reliant living
3. Integration of water, people, animals, land, plants, technologies, and community for productive and beautiful environments: Everything is connected to everything else
4. Building harmony, through cooperation with an attitude of Positivism
5. Global grass roots movement applicable on all scales and in all situations anywhere in the world

## **Goals**

1. Long term self-reliance - consider seven generations  
A generation: the average time interval between the birth of parents and the birth of their offspring.
2. Work with nature rather than against it
3. Think globally act locally
4. Plan for small-scale energy efficient systems - intensive rather than extensive
5. Eat a bioregional diet— grow food in urban - suburban - and rural settings
6. Hold water and fertility as high on the land as possible
7. The problem is the solution - - turn constraints into resources
8. Reforest - restore earth fertility
9. Utilize native plants along with other diverse functioning plants
10. Increase sum of yields
  - a.) Succession, natural ecosystems change over time giving rise to different plants and animals
  - b.) Stocking, find the balance of various elements keeping one from overpowering the other(s), number of elements in a guild
  - c.) Stacking, multi-layer and functions for each element
11. Invent and re-invent – CLOSE THE LOOPS
12. Whatever we take, we must return:  
One calorie in/ One calorie out = sustainability  
input = output=energy cycling  
The user must pay (i.e. tree tax, recycling, seed collecting, composting, energy cycling)
13. Start small, make lots of little mistakes.
14. The earth, Gaia, is the super client
15. Permaculture starts at your doorstep and is a way of life.

*The work of the Permaculture designer is to maximize useful energy storages in every system on which they are working: within a house and garden/farm on urban or rural lands and within the community.*

“The traditional knowledge has allowed our indigenous peoples to develop certain lifeways, values and cultural practices that have allowed us to live in balance and in a sustainable way for thousands of years.” Tom Goldtooth Navajo Nation, N.M.

# **ETHICS & PRINCIPLES OF PERMACULTURE**

Cascadia Permaculture 2011

## ***Ethics:***

- Care for the Earth
- Care for People
- Limit Consumption and Share the Surplus

### *The Prime Directive of Permaculture*

The only ethical decision is to take responsibility for all living things.

## **A SAMPLING OF PRIMARY PRINCIPLES FOR FUNCTIONAL DESIGN**

- 1. Observe and Interact:** Use protracted and thoughtful observation rather than prolonged and thoughtless action. Observe the site and its elements in all seasons. Design for specific sites, clients, and climates. Observe patterns in nature. Work from patterns to details.
- 2. Connect:** Use *relative location*: Place elements in ways that create useful relationships and time-saving connections. The number of *connections* among elements, not only the number of elements, creates a healthy, diverse ecosystem.
- 3. Catch and store energy and materials:** Identify, collect, and hold the useful flows moving through the site. By saving and re-investing resources, we maintain the system and capture abundant resources.
- 4. Each element performs multiple functions:** Choose and place each element in a system to perform as many functions as possible. Increasing beneficial connections between diverse components creates a stable whole. Stack elements in both space and time.
- 5. Each function is supported by multiple elements:** Use multiple methods to achieve important functions and to create synergies. Redundancy protects when one or more elements fail.
- 6. Make the least change for the greatest effect:** Find the “leverage points” (advantages) in the system and intervene there, where the least work accomplishes the most change.
- 7. Use small scale, intensive systems:** Start at your doorstep with the smallest systems that will do the job, and build on your successes, with variations.
- 8. Stability through Diversity:** It is not the number of elements in a design but the functional/beneficial connections. Consider the ecological, species (plants/animals), genetics, and cultural applications.

## **PRINCIPLES FOR LIVING AND ENERGY SYSTEMS**

- 9. Optimize edge and value the margins:** The edge—the intersection of two environments—is the most diverse place in a system, and is where energies and materials accumulate.
- 10. Accelerate succession:** Systems evolve over time with greater diversity and productivity. Use design to jump-start succession.
- 11. Use and value biological & renewable resources & services:** Renewable resources (usually plants and animals) reproduce and build up over time, store energy, assist yield, and interact with other elements.
- 12. Recycle energy:** Supply local and on-site needs with energy from the system, and reuse this energy as many times as possible. Every cycle is an opportunity for yield.

## **ATTITUDES**

- 13. Turn challenges into solutions:** Constraints can inspire creative design. “We are surrounded by insurmountable opportunities”. (Pogo; Walt Kelly)
- 14. Obtain a yield.** Design for both immediate and long-term returns from your efforts: “You can’t work on an empty stomach.” Set up positive feedback loops to build the system and repay your investment.
- 15. Abundance is limitless.** The designer’s imagination and skill are bigger limits to yield than any physical limit.
- 16. Mistakes are tools for learning:** Evaluate your trials. Making mistakes is a sign you’re learning to do things better.
- 17. Integrate Rather than Segregate:** The connections between things are as important as the things themselves.
- 18. Creatively Use and Respond to Change:** Vision is not seeing things as they are but as they will be.

***Derived from the works of Bill Mollison and David Holmgren***