

# PERMACULTURE

for

# SOLUTIONS

## CLIMATE

## CHANGE



The situation is grave and vast changes are needed.



## Who We Are

The Permaculture Solutions for Climate Change working group is an ever-growing group of practitioners, educators, researchers and organizers from all over the world with the shared goal of promoting and supporting integrative, whole-systems solutions to the climate crisis by coordinating our collective expertise, experience and efforts. The group was originally formed at the International Permaculture Convergence in Cuba in 2012, recently regrouped at the IPC in London in the fall of 2015, and continues to grow and expand today. Our organization is sponsored in Europe by the [Permaculture Association](#) and in the United States by the [Global Village Institute](#).



## Our Mission

The goal of our organization is to promote and support effective solutions that can help reduce the impacts of climate change and aid communities in adapting to those changes which are inevitable. We aim to establish a global reach, offering mutual support, directing resources to regenerative programs, providing information and connections to those wishing to get involved in their local communities, offering education, training trainers and amplifying the voice of permaculture in discussions and policy-making. We are currently in the beginning stages of establishment, but are poised to achieve these goals, both on the ground and via an online portal, once the necessary funding and resources are secured.



## Permaculture Climate Change Statement

Permaculture is a system of ecological design as well as a global movement of practitioners, educators, researchers and organizers, bound by three core ethics: care for the earth, care for the people and care for the future. Permaculture integrates knowledge and practices that draw from many disciplines and links them into solutions to meet human needs while ensuring a resilient future. With little funding or institutional support, this movement has spread over the past forty years and now represents projects on every inhabited continent,



*The Taos Pueblo, still standing after over 1,000 years, offers an example of sustainable ways of building with locally-sourced, natural materials.*

climate change fall most heavily on frontline communities, who have done the least to cause it. Indigenous communities hold worldviews and perspectives that are vitally needed to help us come back into balance with the natural world. We must build and repair relationships across cultures and communities on a basis of respect, and the voices, leadership and needs of frontline and indigenous communities must be given prominence in all efforts to address the problem.

Permaculture ethics direct us to create abundance, share it fairly, and limit overconsumption in order to benefit the whole. Healthy, just, truly democratic communities are a potent antidote to climate change.

Both the use of fossil fuels and the mismanagement of land and resources are driving the climate crisis. We must shift from fire to flow: from burning oil, gas, coal and uranium to capturing flows of energy from sun, wind, and water in safe and renewable ways.

Soil is the key to sequestering excess carbon. By restoring the world's degraded soils, we can store carbon as soil fertility, heal degraded land, improve water cycles and quality, and produce healthy food and true abundance. Protection, restoration and regeneration of ecosystems and communities are the keys to both mitigation and adaptation.

The permaculture movement offers vital perspectives and tools to address catastrophic climate change.

Human-caused climate change is a crisis of systems—ecosystems and social systems--and must be addressed systemically. No single new technology or blanket solution will solve the problem. Permaculture employs systems thinking, looking at patterns, relationships and flows, linking solutions together into synergistic strategies that work with nature and fit local conditions, terrain, and cultures.

Efforts to address the climate crisis must be rooted in social, economic, and ecological justice. The barriers to solutions are political and social, not technical, and the impacts of



*Volunteers build affordable, efficient and sustainable modern housing using natural materials at [Emerald Earth](#) in northern California.*

Permaculture integrates knowledge, experience, research and practices from many disciplines to restore landscapes and communities on a large scale. These strategies include:

- A spectrum of safe, renewable energy technologies.
- Scientific research and exchange of knowledge, information and innovations.
- Water harvesting, retention and restoration of functional water systems.
- Forest conservation, reforestation and sustainable forestry.
- Regenerative agricultural practices—organic, no-till and low-till, polycultures, small-scale intensive systems and agroecology.
- Planned rotational grazing, grasslands restoration, and silvopasture systems.
- Agroforestry, food forests and perennial systems.
- Bioremediation and mycoremediation.
- Increasing soil organic carbon using biological methods: compost, compost teas, mulch, fungi, worms and beneficial micro-organisms.
- Sustainably produced biochar for carbon capture and soil-building.
- Protection and restoration of oceanic ecosystems.
- Community-based economic models, incorporating strategies such as co-operatives, local currencies, gift economies, and horizontal economic networks.
- Relocalization of food systems and economic enterprises to serve communities.
- Conservation, energy efficiency, re-use, recycling and full cost accounting.
- A shift to healthier, climate-friendly diets.
- Demonstration sites, model systems, ecovillages and intentional communities.
- Conflict transformation, trauma counseling and personal and spiritual healing.
- Transition Towns and other local movements to create community resilience.
- And many more!



[UpGarden](#) in Seattle, Wa is the largest publicly-accessible community garden in the U.S.

None of these tools function alone. Each unique place on earth will require its own mosaic of techniques and practices to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

To deepen our knowledge of these approaches and refine our ability to apply and combine them, we need to fund and support unbiased, independent scientific research.

Each one of us has a unique and vital role to play in meeting this greatest of global challenges. The crisis is grave, but if together we meet it with hope and action, we have the tools we need to create a world that is healthy, balanced, vibrant, just, abundant and beautiful.

Adopted by the General Assembly of the International Permaculture Convergence, London, 2015.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is permaculture?

Permaculture is a system of ecological design that works with nature to meet human needs while regenerating the environment around us. It is also a global movement of practitioners, educators, researchers and organizers, with projects on every inhabited continent, which is poised to make critical contributions to address the climate crisis.

### How can permaculture help the climate crisis?

Climate change is a social crisis as well as an ecological crisis. Permaculture is guided by three core ethics that bring together ecological and human wellbeing - earth care, people care, and care for the future. We can only truly address the climate crisis in a framework that integrates social, economic, and ecological justice.

Permaculture focuses on solutions, and has the capacity to inspire and energize people to make change on a large scale.

### What makes permaculture-based solutions different from others?

Permaculture encompasses many solutions to reducing carbon emissions and safely pulling excess carbon out of the atmosphere and sequestering it in ways that build resilience. But more than that, permaculture embodies a way of thinking that is holistic and looks at patterns and systems, not single solutions. Yet permaculture solutions and understandings are not often present in climate change discussions, programs and negotiations.

The climate crisis is the product of a system, and must be addressed systemically. No single new technology or blanket solution is capable of addressing the challenges that we face. Permaculture offers a holistic framework in which to integrate knowledge and practices that draw from many sectors and disciplines, and links them into regenerative solutions.



### Why should we go beyond reducing carbon emissions to focusing on carbon sequestration? How can this be achieved?

We are already beyond the tipping point for climate change. We must immediately reduce carbon emissions, and we must find ways to take carbon out of the atmosphere. Rebuilding damaged soil and repairing damaged environments are the key approaches that safely sequester carbon.

The world's soils have a huge carbon debt. Meeting that debt can pull carbon out of the atmosphere and use it to restore soil fertility, repair damaged water cycles, reverse desertification and support revegetation and reforestation.

We can pull carbon out of the atmosphere and sequester it into the soil using nature's own methods: plants, compost, and other techniques that build healthy soil. Doing so has no dangerous side effects, and it is exactly what we need to do to regenerate ecosystems and the true basis for abundance.

A model of a [regenerative food forest](#) in Southern Australia.

Photo: Graham Brookman





*A community tea station, public bench and free library box at this beautifully painted intersection shows an example of the community-building work that [City Repair](#) has successfully initiated in Portland, Oregon.*

## Why is it important to build community?

Resilient communities, participatory democracy, and local control of resources are key to addressing the climate crisis. Industries and enterprises must be rooted in and responsible to communities.

Regenerating ecosystems goes hand in hand with renewing local participatory democracy, and reviving failing economies to generate real abundance and a higher quality of life.

## Why is it important to protect and build relationships with frontline communities?

An effective response to the climate crisis depends on the leadership of frontline communities. The concerns and needs of these communities, who bear the brunt of environment degradation and disasters, must guide our responses to the climate crisis. In order to take action that is both effective and just, those of us now shielded from the climate crisis must seek out, and respect, the leadership of frontline communities.

## ...what about indigenous cultures?

Indigenous cultures hold world-views and perspectives that are desperately needed to help us make the shift to a balanced world.

These cultures are extremely varied and diverse around the world, but most hold a common thread of values that see nature as sacred and promote reverence, connection and balance. We need that wisdom today.

Many indigenous communities are also on the front lines of climate change, have taken the lead in resisting destructive practices, and need support in their real struggles for survival and justice.

## What are the barriers keeping existing solutions and tools from implementation?

While the need for scientific research is real, the barriers are not technical, they are social and political. Key policy shifts are needed:

- Governmental policies should be adopted to encourage regenerative practices and discourage destructive ones.
- Governments and institutions must be held accountable to the needs and leadership of frontline communities.
- Funding must be directed to support meaningful research, training, and the material needs and economic costs of this transition.
- Research is needed to continue to document and improve the effectiveness of these practices and prevent misapplications.
- Wealthy countries (who have contributed most to climate change) must greatly reduce consumption of energy and material goods, while paying their climate debt to the developing world by funding locally-led, sustainable, carbon-friendly development there.



## How can I get involved?

We must advocate for these changes with every tool at our disposal, including education, persuasion, lobbying, developing models, running for office, protest and nonviolent direct action. Individuals can each find their niche in this work, and we can value those differences in approach that help us reach a common goal of systemic change.

## Contact us

Email: [stephanie@urbiculturecommunityfarms.org](mailto:stephanie@urbiculturecommunityfarms.org) | Web: <http://www.permacultureclimatechange.org>