



Earth Jurisprudence Update

Earth-centred News and Inspiration

Greetings all,

This new moon, we bring tidings of the latest ecocentric legal developments, an initiative to map the global Rights of Nature movement and practices for restoring relationship with our wild kin. We also share an exploration of animal rights, a film celebrating an upswell of enthusiasm for human-scale local economies and a manifesto for Earth Democracy as well as resources on Doughnut Economics, decolonisation and planetary boundaries.

As the movement towards Earth-centred futures waxes ever brighter, we invite you to forward this update to those in your networks.

With warm, wild wishes,

Carlotta, on behalf of the Gaia Team

Ecocentric Legal Developments

Turtle Island: Ponca Tribe Recognises the Rights of Rivers

On 6th July, the Ponca Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma Business Committee unanimously adopted a new statute recognizing the “immutable Rights of Rivers” for two rivers, Ní’skà (the Arkansas River) and Ni’Ží’dè (the Salt Fork River), as well as other water bodies that flow through their territory. In 2016, the Ponca Nation were also the first tribe in the US to recognise the Rights of Nature within their tribal laws. “We have so much to learn from our waters, everything upstream impacts everything downstream, we are all connected” says Ponca elder, Casey Camp Horinek.

Colombia: The Truth Commission Recognises Nature as a Victim of Armed Conflict

This Spanish language article reflects on the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which affirms that Nature has been a victim of Colombia’s decades-long armed conflict. Members of the Commission identified three types of wounds left by the war on Nature: transformations in the landscape, the impact of the conflict on the lives of those who cared for the ecosystems, and the

"testimonies" of Nature. "The forest has secrets of pain. The forest, the territory, also knows a truth. And how does it tell that truth? Its vegetation is not the same when it tells us the pain. How do I explain? With the color, with the shape of the forest, a hunter knows that something abnormal happened, that there is something wrong, that does not fit. That is the message that the forest gives us. The forest tells us many things," attested one of the interviewees.

Communities Declaring the Rights of Rivers

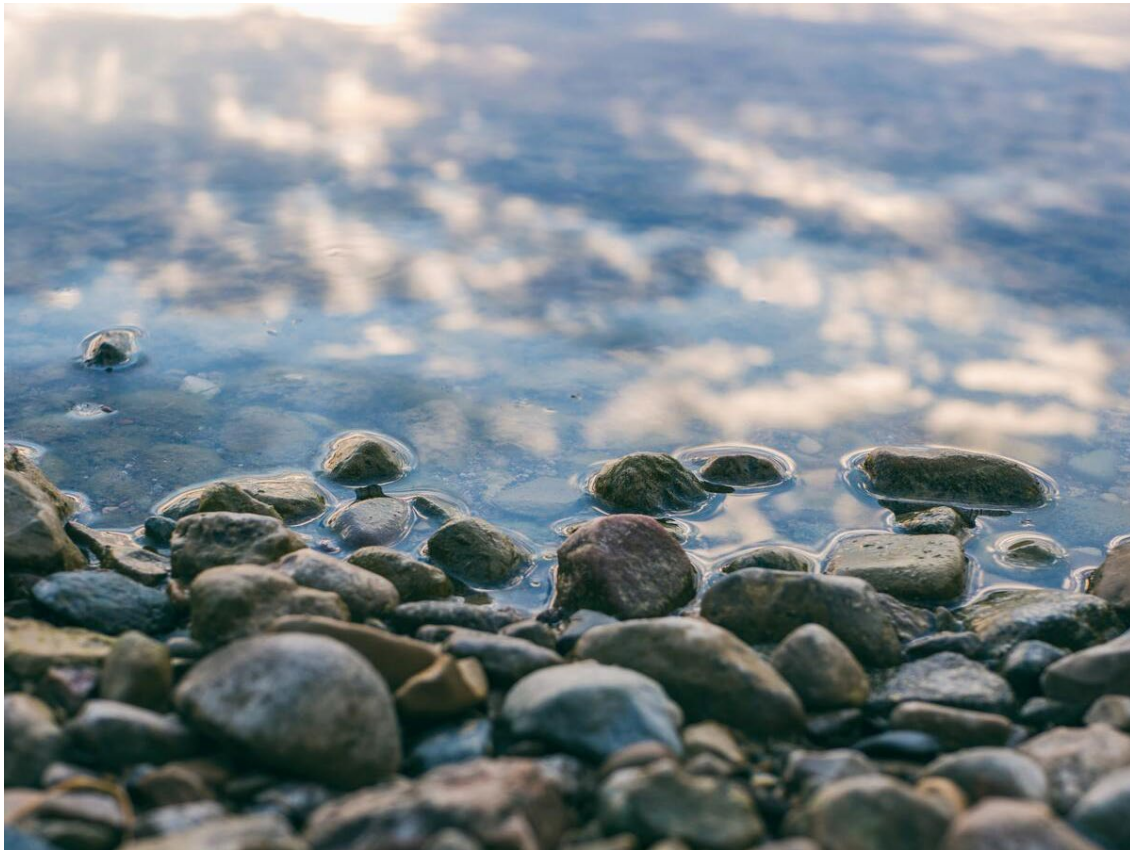


Photo credit - Aaron Burden on Unsplash

Europe: Growing Momentum for the Recognition of River Rights

This French language article, *In Corsica, the Fight of the River which Speaks*, tells the story of how locals in Corsica are proclaiming the rights of the River Tavignano in an attempt to defend the river against the installation of a waste disposal project on its banks. Meanwhile, communities are rallying to **declare the rights of rivers in the UK**. "A more realistic step that community groups are already starting to do across the UK is to declare the rights of the river themselves. Even though the law would remain the same, [Paul] Powlesland believes that ordinary people deciding to act as guardians of nature would result in rivers like the Avon being better protected. 'People on the ground who love and care for the river, who know the river, that has real power,' he says."

Rights of Nature: Mapping the Movement

A Quantitative Analysis of Rights of Nature Initiatives Across the World

This research paper identifies and analyses 409 Rights of Nature initiatives in 39 countries, creating the most comprehensive database of Rights of Nature initiatives to date. The paper includes two detailed

maps and is a contribution to the soon-to-be-launched Eco-Jurisprudence Monitor, an interactive online platform currently being developed by the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature Academic Hub which will compile “ecological jurisprudence” initiatives globally as well as related resources for researchers, policymakers, lawyers, and activists. “Likely our main conclusion is that RoN represent a substantial, global, and lasting trend towards a non-anthropocentric human relationship with Nature. Barely older than a decade and a half, it appears to reflect the next instalment in the conceptualization of rights”.

Kinship

Becoming Supracellular

In this essay published by Advaya, Sophie Strand asks “If a cursory study of somatics shows that we think with our entire body, then how much better could we think, if we thought with our entire web of wild kin?... In an age when anthropocentrism is fueling mass extinction and ecocide, it seems vitally important to practice thinking like other beings. Or even, when we feel ambitious, trying to think alongside the deep time oscillations of an entire ecosystems.”

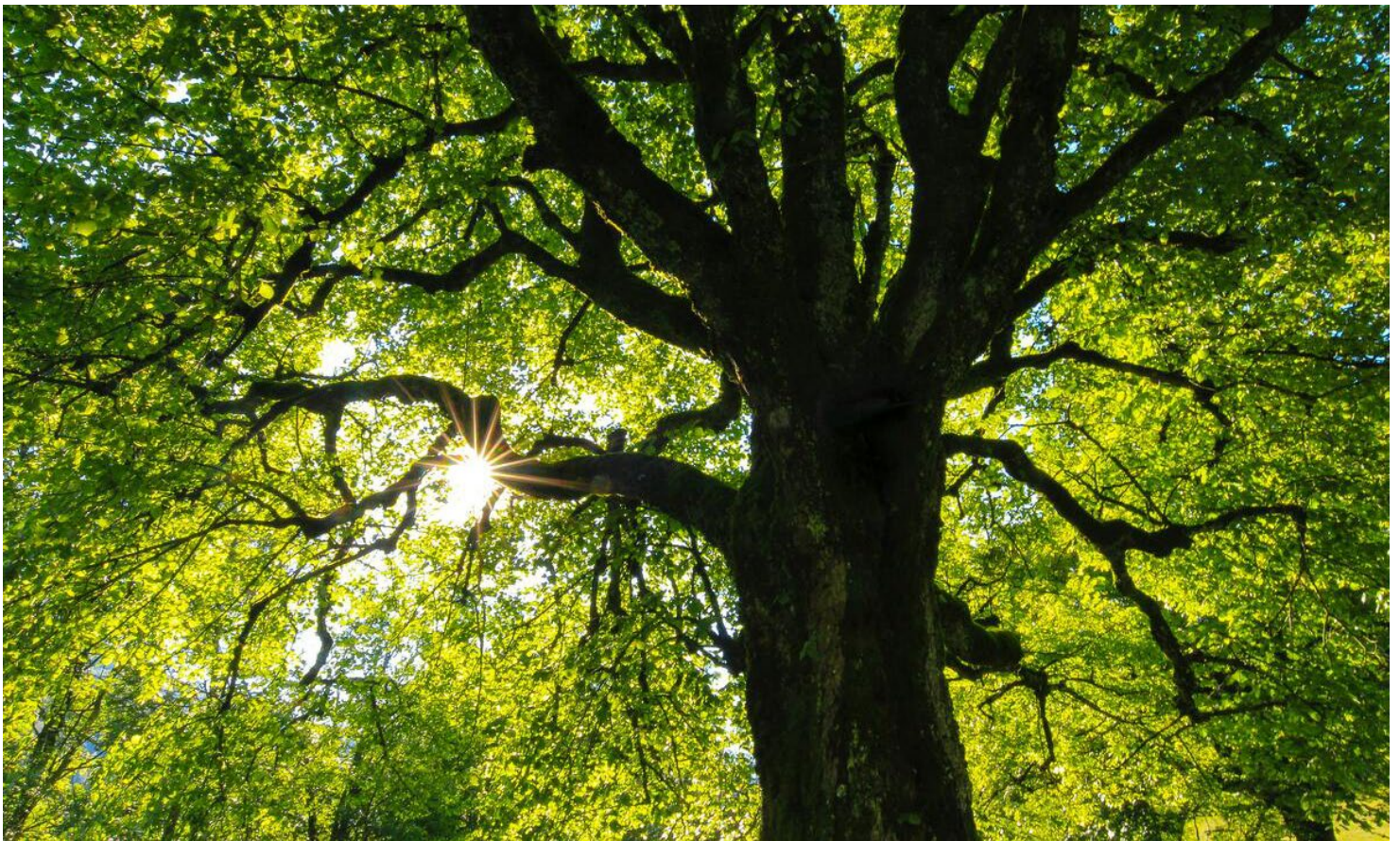


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Practices and Rituals from the Center for Spirituality in Nature

In *Ritual & Renewal*, Mary Underwood shares an annual practice inspired by Elizabeth Gilbert: “each year, on the first morning of the year, you go for a walk outside, preferably in the woods. The first wild animal you see is your totem animal for the year and is meant to teach and guide you. After all, all of our fellow beings have something to teach us, if only we are willing to listen.” The Center for Spirituality in Nature has also shared a collection of [spiritual nature practices](#), videos and other ideas for engaging

with Nature and Spirit, including following the Sun's passage over the year and observing the seasons through the life cycle of a local tree.

Animal Rights

US: Animal Rights and the Campaign to Release Happy the Elephant from the Bronx Zoo

Harvard Law Today discusses the latest developments in animal rights with Kristen Stilt, director of Harvard's Animal Law & Policy Program, in the wake of the New York State Court of Appeals' rejection last month of a lawsuit claiming that Happy, an elephant at the Bronx Zoo, should be considered a person for purposes of habeas corpus and released. "The court is engaged in a dangerous fantasy. It is not only harmful to Happy, but it is the very kind of thinking that has placed our planet on a fast track to global warming, to the severe weather events, to the emergence of new zoonotic diseases, to species extinction, and other devastating consequences. The line between 'us' and 'them' that the court believes is so clear is pure fiction."

Localisation

Planet Local: A Quiet Revolution

Produced by international NGO Local Futures, this 50-minute film presents a quiet and transformative revolution emerging worldwide: the movement for localisation. "Away from the screens of the mainstream media, the crude 'bigger is better' narrative that has dominated economic thinking for centuries is being challenged. Countless initiatives are already underway to protect and restore human-scale local economies, communities and the natural world, demonstrating that human beings need not be the problem – we can be the solution."



Earth Democracy

Manifesto on Economies of Care and Earth Democracy

Vandana Shiva published this Manifesto on World Environment Day 2022 on the basis that “Care of the Earth and of all life is our ethical and eco-logical responsibility.” Central principles include Care of the Earth and Earth Rights, Regenerating Community, Reclaiming the Commons, Diversity and Decentralisation and Consideration and Care for the Rights of Future Generations. “The future of the next generations can only be secured if we take the path of care and respect for the Earth, which requires a profound shift in the global economic, cultural and environmental paradigm”.

Resource Spotlight

Greenprints Initiative

Explore recordings of online talks hosted by the Australian Earth Laws Alliance as part of the ‘Greenprints Workshop series’. Topics include the [latest update on Planetary Boundaries](#) with Professor Will Steffen, [Doughnut Economics](#) with Rob Shorter from the Doughnut Economy Action Lab, the [decolonisation of our thinking and actions](#) with Dr Mary Graham and Professor Yin Paradies, and [Indigenous philosophy and the relationist ethos](#) with Dr Mary Graham.