



Earth Jurisprudence Update

Earth-centred News and Inspiration

Greetings Friends,

We share this newsletter with tender hearts, deeply moved by the passing of our cherished elder Joanna Macy. A Mother Tree of the movement to foster Earth-centred consciousness and culture, Joanna nurtured a global community dedicated to aligning with life in all its creaturely forms. Indeed Joanna's love for our living planet was immense and she insisted: "If the world is to be healed through human efforts, I am convinced it will be by ordinary people, people whose love for this life is even greater than their fear."

This latest Earth Jurisprudence Update is abundant with stories and initiatives catalysed by just such people; saplings and shoots of hope. In the words of Rebecca Solnit, "[Joanna is] a tree that's fallen; she's a tree that trees have grown out of...she fed and nourished and loved and guided a possible future... Joanna Macy is with us in a thousand ways... she will be underneath the effort of countless others, feeding and anchoring their work." In this Update we celebrate a selection of such efforts, and draw strength and sustenance from the deep-rooted and multi-branching legacy of our dear ancestor, Joanna Macy.

With wild wishes,

Carlotta, on behalf of the Gaia Team

Earthly Flourishing

Reviving Tradition for Future Abundance in Kenya



Mugwe, the divine leader of the Tharaka people, by Andy Pilsbury

The Tharaka community of Mount Kenya is reclaiming its biocultural wealth by revitalizing traditional knowledge. Simon Mitambo of the African Earth Jurisprudence Collective tells the story, in collaboration with Rory Sheldon and Terralingua. “Reviving a diversity of peoples and places around the world is not just about looking to the past, before colonial and industrial powers homogenized our paths. It is about rooting ourselves in a spiritual, cultural, and ecological identity from which we are able to envision a bioculturally abundant future in this changing world.”

Multispecies Governance

Reimagining Democracy: How Diverse Knowledges are Creating More-Than-Human Justice

Sydney Environment Institute hosts this panel discussion exploring how other animals, forests, rivers and ecosystems can be included in decision making practices, with speakers Patricia Gualinga, Nardi Simpson, Shrishtee Bajpai and Paul Powlesland. “There’s a pluriverse of ways of knowing and being in the world that have been...violently wiped out... So many communities across the world are already living these worldviews....” Shrishtee Bajpai.

A More-Than-Human Response to Land Use for England

This case study explores a creaturely chorus of responses to Defra’s Land Use Framework emerging from an Interspecies Council: “a participatory methodology that brings the voices and perspectives of more-than-human life into decision-making... 34 participants...stepped into the perspectives of more-than-human beings from Oak to River, Mayfly to Pig. Through story, embodiment and expanding their imagination, they spoke from those beings’ perspectives”. Developed by Moral Imaginations, this approach has roots in the Council of All Beings process co-developed by Joanna Macy.



Indus River meeting Zaskar River, Ladakh, India by Jagadip Singh via Flickr

Rivers Rising

The River Parliament: A Sacred Confluence Speaks Out

With the playfulness of chuckling stream, Ashish Kothari shares a gushing, roaring, gurgling current of a conversation between South Asia's rivers. "Recently, I was a lucky observer of what was surely the first ever gathering of this kind, at least in living memory. South Asia's rivers came together to discuss the various issues they are facing, and work out strategies to deal with them. Each was represented by a tightly bound set of water drops that travelled to the meeting place courtesy some obliging clouds."

Rivers in Deep Time

In this poetic praise song, Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman explores rivers through the lens of deep time "not just as water bodies, but as living forces that have shaped our world for millions of years... to see a river through deep time is to see it as a teacher... A spirit living on through time. And when we ignore this, when we try to force a river to follow our rules, we forget that we are just a moment in its long story, mere sediments in its vast unbounded flow."

Ecological Governance

Rights of Nature Developments

OCEANS

In the wake of the UN Oceans Conference, there's been an upswell of initiatives to protect our living waters, from efforts to enshrine the [legal personhood of bottlenose dolphins](#) on South Korea's Jeju island to a plan for the [world's first Indigenous-led ocean reserve](#) from the governments of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Check out Ocean Vision Legal's excellent [toolkit to advance Ocean Rights](#) and Earth Law Center's campaign to recognise the rights of Deep Sea Species and Ecosystems [here](#).



Bottlenose dolphins by Martin Loftus via Flickr

LANDMARK LAW: ADVISORY OPINION FROM INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

At international level, the [Inter-American Court of Human Rights affirmed the importance of the Rights of Nature](#) in the face of planetary crisis. This recognition forms part of a “legally momentous” advisory opinion from the Court regarding states’ obligations in response to the climate crisis. In the [words of Léa Weimann](#), “According to the court, preventing harm to the climate system is a global legal obligation that applies to all states. This obligation requires the prohibition of activities that pose an irreversible threat to the vital balance of interdependent ecosystems that enable the survival of present and future generations.”

NATIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS

At national level, the Santurbán moorland in Colombia and Lake San Pablo and Irquis River in Ecuador have each been recognised as a subject of rights. In England, a current of riverine campaigns are gaining strength. Basingstoke & Deane Council recognised the [legal personhood of Hampshire’s rare chalk streams](#) whilst community actions are bubbling up to affirm the rights of the River Medway, the Itchen Estuary and the Rivers Sid, Simene, Brit, Lym, Asker, Otter Char and Piddle in Devon and Dorset. Thomas Rickard provides an [insightful analysis of UK River Guardianship here](#).



Sunlight through trees by Andy Pilsbury

The Ethics of Energy

Energy Sovereignty

“In traditional African cosmologies, energy was not separate from life. It flowed through the soil, the sun, the wind, and the people. Fire was shared. Water was sacred. Light was communal. The fossil-fuel era broke this balance, severing energy from ethics, and turning it into a commodity to be bought and sold.” Dr. Million Belay of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa outlines his vision of energy sovereignty for the continent.

Kinship

A Handbook for Kincentric Leaders: Co-creating with a Living Intelligent Earth

Kincentric Leadership offers this comprehensive and catalysing companion text to accompany leaders at all levels to serve on behalf of all life. “This handbook is a call to remember ourselves as part of the greater web of life, and an attempt to demonstrate how we can live and lead from the realisation of our interdependence with a living, intelligent Earth. It offers principles, practices and pathways for weaving kinship into the fabric of our personal, organisational and systemic choices”.

On the Horizon

Resurgence Trust Festival of Wellbeing

Join the Resurgence Trust online on Saturday 4 October for an uplifting, day-long event bringing together leading thinkers, activists, and educators to explore the deep connections between personal wellbeing, care for the Earth, and social transformation. Speakers include Satish Kumar, Fritjof Capra, Nadia Colburn, Tony Juniper, Mary-Ann Ochota, and many more.

Joanna Macy

A Deep-rooted and Multi-branching Legacy



Joanna Macy by Ojai Foundation via Flickr

As Rebecca Solnit affirms in her [heartfelt tribute](#), “Joanna Macy is with us in a thousand ways... she will be underneath the effort of countless others, feeding and anchoring their work.” You can find out more about Joanna on [her website](#) and explore a cornucopia of resources in connection with the [Work that Reconnects](#)— of which Joanna was the root teacher – here. We close with this enlivening reflection from Joanna:

“To be alive in this beautiful, self-organizing universe – to participate in the dance of life with senses to perceive it, lungs that breathe it, organs that draw nourishment from it – is a wonder beyond words.”