



Earth Jurisprudence Update

Earth-centred News and Inspiration

Greetings Friends,

Today, we celebrate Africa Environment and Wangari Maathai Day. Inspired by the deep wisdom of Earth-centred cultures across the African continent – and Wangari’s courageous advocacy for the connection between ecological and social justice – we are delighted to launch the [African Earth Jurisprudence Collective’s new website](#), adding the Collective’s voice to wider continental efforts to heal the human-Earth relationship.

As we come together to restore, protect and connect with our Mother Earth, we invite you to share this website with others who believe in the power of community to heal destroyed diversities and shape a flourishing future.

We also share news of ecocentric legal developments, an exploration of bioregioning, discussions on regenerative farming and ecological economics, as well as reflections on community efforts to move beyond extractivism and a practice to ground in the place you call home.

Thank you for being part of this journey, and honouring Wangari’s spirit and Mother Earth with us today.

With warm and wild wishes,

Carlotta, on behalf of the Gaia Team

African Earth Jurisprudence Collective

New Website Launch



New African Earth Jurisprudence Collective website

Learn more about our community of practice, the African Earth Jurisprudence Collective, through our newly launched website. This online platform is dedicated to amplifying the work of Earth Jurisprudence Practitioners: “We accompany African communities on journeys of decolonisation, guided by the philosophy and practice of Earth Jurisprudence. Together, we are reviving indigenous wisdom, strengthening food sovereignty, protecting sacred natural sites, restoring nature and recognising eco-centred governance. Together, we are healing destroyed diversities and enhancing resilience to the polycrisis of our time. Together, we are a uniquely African hope, at once innovative and ancient.”

Reviving Rituals of Reverence

EarthLore Foundation, founding member of the Collective, shares recent stories of the revival of rituals that honour the wider web of life and ancestral lineages in Venda, South Africa. After a hiatus of 40 years, the sacred **Suko seed blessing ritual took place in Mazwimba, Venda**. As Earth Jurisprudence Practitioner Mashudu Takalani explains: “Through these sacred practices, individuals reaffirm their respect for the land and their dependence on its cycles. This tradition fosters a deep sense of harmony and gratitude among the participants.”

In Tshiavha, Venda, the Uluma (first fruits) ceremony was performed for the first time in the memory of community elders. “The symbolism of first feeding the cow that represents the ancestors, followed by sharing with others, underscored the communal nature of the ceremony and the spirit of unity that permeated the event. It was a powerful reminder of the deep connection between the community and their ancestors, as well as their belief in the importance of maintaining balance and harmony.”

Honouring Wangari Maathai

The Gaia Foundation, founding member of the Collective, reflects today on our treasured friendship with our dear ancestor, Wangari Maathai. “Many years back, Wangari spent time with the Gaia Foundation team and the ‘father of Earth Jurisprudence’, Thomas Berry, and remains an inspiration for all emerging African Earth Jurisprudence practitioners. Together with another beloved ancestor, the Kenyan lawyer Ng'ang'a Thiongo, she worked tirelessly to include Earth Jurisprudence principles in the Kenyan constitution as it was being reformed in the early 2000s, and gave her support in the early years of evolving this approach to revive our traditional and Earth-centred ways of living and being in this world.”



Wangari Maathai

Ecocentric Legal Developments

Historic Decision Sees River Ouse Set to Become First in England with Legal Rights

The Environmental Law Foundation breaks the heartening news that “Lewes District Council have agreed to recognise the Rights of the River Ouse, paving the way for the Ouse to become the first in England to have its legal rights recognised by a local authority. The decision represents a major step in the UK’s environmental movement, acknowledging the growing international trend of granting rivers legal rights.”



River Ouse by Sue Oreilly via Flickr

International Overview: New Rights of Nature Dossier

Heinrich Böll Stiftung has just launched a series of articles from activists and academics immersed in the currents of the international movement to respect the Rights of Nature and to implement Earth-centred governance across our bioregions. From [analysis of the European legal landscape](#) to [Indigenous Biocultures in Uganda](#), a diversity of voices brings visibility to how this approach can be practically implemented and the opportunities it offers.

Contrasting Legal Approaches: Legal Personhood vs. Rights of Nature

Ben Price of CELDF responds to a recent article on whether granting legal ‘personhood’ to nature can stem biodiversity loss, highlighting the pitfalls of the personhood model and questioning “the article’s conflation of ‘personhood’ as a fictional designation in law with the more fundamental, pre-existing, and unalienable rights of nature... What if, instead of shoehorning the whole of creation into human-made and commerce-friendly legal definitions, we take as real that which presents itself to us in the real world?”

Beyond Extractivism

How to Confront the Beast

From the heart of the antimining resistance movement in Antioquia, Colombia, Planet Coordinate’s Rachel Donald reports: “One of Visión Suroeste’s core beliefs is that to love a thing you must know it.

Rather than demand support from a position of moral authority, they have worked diligently to invite their neighbours into a learning process in the hope that by building awareness of how teeming with life their territoria is, others will join the call to protect it...They work from the premise that love is a better motivator than fear or righteousness.”



Antioquia, Colombia by Anderson Avila Silva via Flickr

From our archives and in connection with this story, see the 5-minute film [In Solidarity](#) about the start of the resistance in Doima, Tolima, to Ashanti-Gold and one of the largest gold mines in the world; and this [8-minute interview](#) with Mariana Gomez of Yes to Life No to Mining discussing the strategies mining companies use to entice communities into leaving their lands.

Regenerative Farming

Listening to the Land



Listening to the Land

Our allies at the Oxford Real Farming Conference have released a cornucopia of conversations from this year's conference. The Listening to the Land series included a panel discussion with Francesca Price, Rupert Sheldrake, Manda Scott, Collective member Colin Campbell and Sandra Salazar asking *What Could the Future Look like if We Listened to the Land?* The *Land, Food and Spirit* session explored how the recognition of a more reciprocal relationship with Nature, alongside developing our own inner capacities, could help transform the way we approach food and farming. All the recordings from the Conference can be enjoyed [here](#).

Ecological Economics

Small is Beautiful Revisited 50 Years On

Honoring the 50th anniversary of E.F. Schumacher's book *Small is Beautiful* in 2023, the Schumacher Center for a New Economics has commissioned this updated study guide from British author and Journalist David Boyle. "A landmark of the modern environmental movement, the book's eminently logical argument for an economics in which people and the planet truly matter has inspired countless readers."

The Bioregioning Movement

Bioregioning and Our Felt Sense of Place

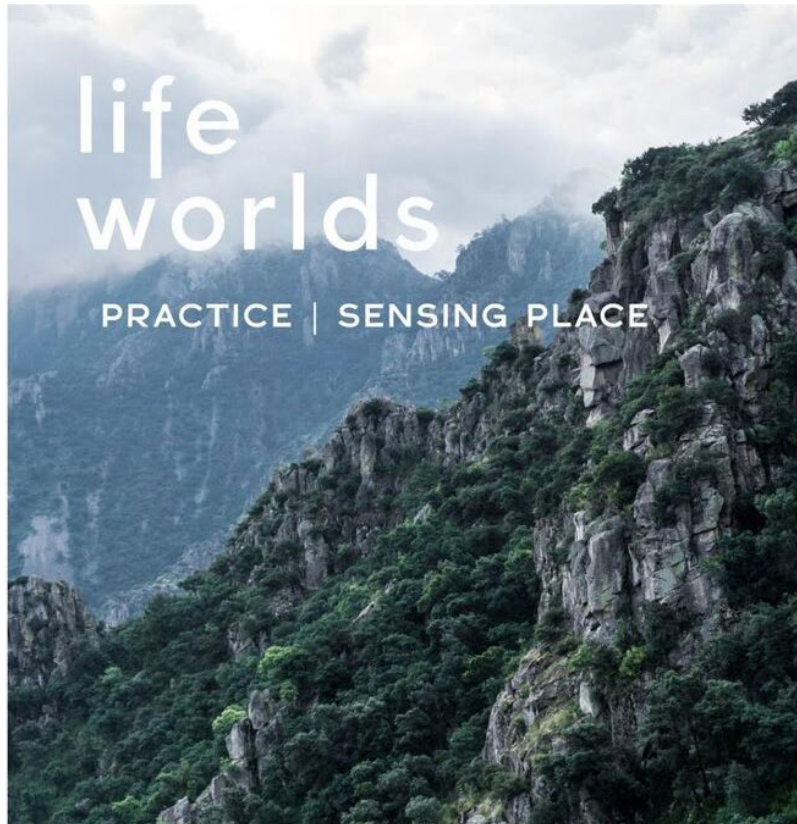
Kosmos Journal shares the edited transcript of a conversation hosted by Nate Hagens with members of

the bioregioning movement, Daniel Christian Wahl, Samantha Power, and Isabel Carlisle.

“Bioregionalism...is a way of organizing ourselves, governing ourselves, and telling stories about ourselves that is rooted in living systems, patterns, and principles... We were born out of the web of life on Earth, and bioregionalism is about coming back into a deeper recognition of that truth and living in harmony and reciprocity with all the plants, animals, insects, water, and rocks in the places where we live. That is our task as humans on this planet: stewarding those relationships.”

Practice

Sensing Place



Lifeworlds podcast

Alexa Firmenich from Lifeworlds Podcast invites us to tune in somatically to the living world through a series of questions that stimulate attentive observation of the local ecosystem to which we belong. “The skills of listening and deep observation are at the core of understanding the lifeworlds of nature. It’s how we begin to fine tune ourselves, like an analogue radio, to frequencies that appeared invisible beforehand. What you will begin to pick up on are nothing less than the dialects and languages of the earth itself.”