



Earth Jurisprudence Update

Earth-centred News and Inspiration

Greetings Friends,

In diverse cultures, November opens with rituals to honour the ancestors. This coincides with the descent into autumn in the North, and the flourishing of spring in the South. We are reminded that death and life are always in a dance together.

Our latest Earth Jurisprudence Update begins in a similar vein, with celebrations of the life-affirming legacies of two ancestors we hold particularly close in our hearts at this time: Thomas Berry, father of Earth Jurisprudence, and Stephan Harding, a soulful scientist and most lyrical advocate for our animate Earth.

We follow with a galvanising selection of the latest ecocentric developments and a call to fall in love with the place we call home. We close with a last word of gratitude to Maria Mercedes Sanchez as she retires from her role guiding the UN Harmony with Nature Programme.

With warm and wild wishes,

Carlotta, on behalf of the Gaia Team

Honouring our Ancestors

Stephan Harding: A Life-affirming Legacy

This September New Moon, when the stars were at their most luminous, a beloved elder – Stephan Harding – passed into the ancestral realm. His deep love of Gaia that was the bubbling spring of his remarkable life and work and way of being in the world. As the river of his life flows into the ocean, we celebrate Stephan's expansive, enlivening vision and his life-affirming legacy [here](#). Experience a Deep Time Walk with Stephan through this [Outrage + Optimism podcast episode](#) or watch this 10-min film Learning to Value by Sam Chevallier.

Celebrating Thomas Berry

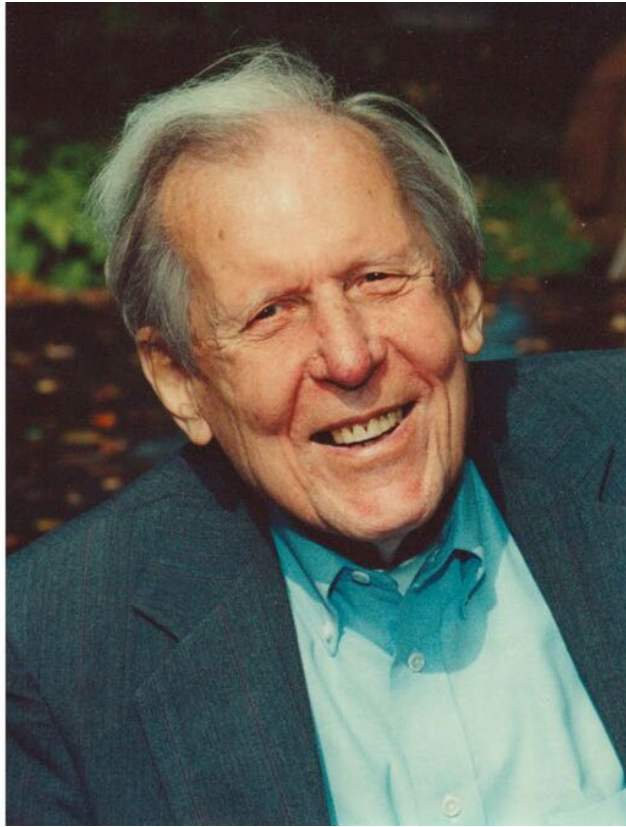


Photo by Lou Niznik Courtesy of The Thomas Berry Foundation

This November, we celebrate the 110th anniversary of Thomas Berry's birth (1914–2009). An elder possessed of a rare far-sightedness about the past, present and future of humankind, Thomas and his writings have been a huge inspiration for Gaia. Here we share [tributes to Thomas Berry](#) from leading lights in the worlds of law, activism, academia, forestry and emerging African Earth Jurisprudence Practitioners - originally gathered to mark the 10-year anniversary of Thomas Berry's passing. And we invite you to explore [A New Story for the Earth](#); an animation and interactive story narrated by Earth justice advocate Nnimmo Bassey and exploring Thomas Berry's vision and legacy.

Ecocentric Initiatives

Ecocentrism in the Global Biodiversity Framework

This white paper written by Earth Law Center with support from Rights of Mother Earth, Lawyers for Nature, End Ecocide Sweden, and Keystone Species Alliance highlights the ecocentric outcomes of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and explains how states can implement and fund rights-based initiatives and Mother Earth centric actions to better meet the goals of the GBF.

Mother Nature in the Boardroom

“I ask all of you directors to see clean rivers as the veins in your bodies, oceans as the air that you breathe, and our beautiful landscapes as tapestries of hope”. Mother Nature in the Boardroom was screened at Climate Week NYC, where Jane Goodall and Gaia ally Craig Foster of Sea Change Project addressed a diverse group of global leaders with a powerful message: it’s time to include our Great Mother in all policymaking.

Indigenous Governance

Colombia Decree Recognises Indigenous People as Environmental Authorities



Illustration still from Gaia Amazonas animation

Colombia’s Constitution of 1991 opened a pathway for pluralism and the recognition of Indigenous administration of their territories (resguardos) as legal entities. In 2018, Decree 632 legally **enabled Indigenous communities in the eastern Amazon to create Indigenous territorial entities (ETIs)**, in Guainía, Amazonas and Vaupés, similar to a municipality, but whose functioning is more aligned with how Indigenous communities govern and manage their land and the environment. (See [this short animation](#), in Spanish, by Gaia Amazonas). This most recent decree grants Indigenous peoples the authority to protect ecosystems, manage and conserve their territories and resources, plan budgets and make decisions about land use in accordance with Indigenous governance systems, Mongabay reports.

If All Life Mattered, What Would Decision-Making Look Like?

“All the plants, animals, rocks, rivers, have spirits, just like us. Our daily lives are led in conversation with these spirits; they and the spirits of our ancestors speak to us in our dreams. This landscape is filled with life, how can we allow it to be destroyed?” states Manari Ushugua, a Sapara Indigenous Nation shaman in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Shrishtee Bajpai and Ashish Kothari propose “Earthy Governance” as a practice whose time has come.

Kawsak Sacha – Living Forest



Photograph of the Bobonaza River near Sarayaku by Heather Cowper on Flickr

The Kichwa people of Sarayaku propose the recognition of Kawsak Sacha (the Living Forest) as a Sacred Territory and Biological and Cultural Patrimony of the Kichwa People in Ecuador. They declare that “the forest is neither simply a landscape for aesthetic appreciation nor a resource for exploitation. It is, rather, the most exalted expression of life itself.”

Rights of Nature in Europe

Moral Imagination for the Rights of Nature: An Embassy of the Baltic Sea

Pella Thiel introduces her new initiative: “In a transnational context lacking legal recognition of Rights of Nature, establishing an Embassy of the Baltic Sea would enhance representation of more-than-human beings and support acknowledgement of RoN. It would be a space inviting a diversity of voices and knowledge forms, practicing speaking for and with the sea. Such cultural “laboratories of care” are important for emerging Earth jurisprudence.”



Photograph by Petr Beránek on Flickr

Rights of Nature Recognised in Germany for the First Time

“[T]he recognition of specific rights of ecological persons through the interpretation and application of existing [European] Union law is necessary due to the importance and urgency of the ecological challenges—climate change, species extinction and global littering—and in view of the threat of irreversible damage.”

The Human-Earth relationship

Fall in Love with a Place

“We throw lavish funerals for the fallen sparrow and delight when the opossum comes to visit.... We let mud get between our toes and we climb the apple trees. With each moment, we are learning this place. We are all falling in love....” This daily meditation from the Center for Action and Contemplation reflects on the importance of falling in love with a place.

Gratitude

United Nations Harmony with Nature Initiative

We close with some words of gratitude to the wonderful Maria Mercedes Sanchez, Director of the United Nations Harmony with Nature Programme. Upon her retirement, members of the Harmony with Nature Knowledge Network – coordinated by Doris Ragettli and others – pay tribute to her important work. “It is no easy task to convince sovereign states to recognize the Rights of Mother Earth, but you did so with grace and aplomb. At the highest international levels, the 14 years of UN Harmony with Nature Mother Earth Day Dialogues inspired us all to think beyond the law and to integrate Nature into the fabric of all systems.”