Partnership With Nature

Toward a New Environmental Ethic
Partnership Ethics

• What is a partnership ethic?
• Why do we need it?
• Where did it come from?
• How can it help?
Partnership Ethics: People and Nature

- The Greatest Good for the Human and Nonhuman Communities is in their Mutual Living Interdependence.
Partnership Ethics

• Equity between the human and nonhuman communities.
• Moral consideration for both humans and other species.
• Respect for cultural diversity and biodiversity.
• Inclusion of women, minorities, and nonhuman nature in the code of ethical accountability.
• An ecologically sound management that is consistent with the continued health of both the human and nonhuman communities.
Why do we need Partnership Ethics?

- Global ecological crisis.
- Global warming, ozone depletion, deforestation, soil erosion, endangered species, loss of forests.
- Population growth: 6 billion people in 2000; 8-12 billion by 2040.
Human Dominion Over Nature

- Adam and Eve, 1526.
- The Fall from Eden.
- Rise of science and technology.
- Recovery from the Fall by recreating Eden on earth.
Francis Bacon's Novum Organum

- "Man can recover that right over nature which belongs to it by divine bequest."
- Man should "establish and extend the power and dominion of the human race over the entire universe."
Clocklike Universe
17th Century

- Model of the universe as a clock.
- God is a clockmaker, engineer, and mathematician.
- Mathematical equations allow prediction.
- Nature can be predicted and controlled.
Reinventing Eden

- From wilderness to garden: The story of western culture.
- Cutting down forests; irrigating deserts.
- Making the desert "blossom as the rose."
Reinventing Eden Today

• "In the Beginning Was the Genome."


• Cloning; genetic engineering.

• Need for a new ethic.

• Partnership ethics.
Origins of Partnership Ethics

- Conservation movement of the late nineteenth century.
- Forest reserves created.
- Rangelands reseeded and soils conserved.
George Perkins Marsh

- "Man should become a co-worker with Nature in the reconstruction of the damaged fabric."
- We can restore the waters, forests, and bogs "laid waste by human improvidence or malice."
• 1887-1948.
• "The Farmer as a Conservationist" (1939).
• "When land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land; when both end up better by reason of their partnership, we have conservation."

• "Once it was the endeavor of art, literature, and philosophy to express the meaning of things and of life, to be the voice of all that is dumb, to endow nature with an organ for making known her sufferings."

• "Today nature's tongue is taken away."
Herbert Marcuse

- *Counter-revolution and Revolt* (1972).
- Nature as an opposing partner.
- Nature is "an ally," a "life-force in its own right."
- The struggle with nature may "subside and make room for peace, 'letting-be,' acceptance."
Riane Eisler

- Dominator societies rank one sex over the other: the blade.
- Partnership societies link the sexes: the chalice.
- Gylany: gyne (woman) + andros (man), linked by “l” from lyein (to resolve).
David Abram

- The Spell of the Sensuous, 1996.
- Hearing nature's voice.
- "The rustling of leaves in an oak tree or an aspen grove is itself a kind of voice."
- "The rhythm and lilt of the local soundscape."
• Edward Lorenz.
• The “butterfly effect.”
• Sensitive dependence on initial conditions.
• Weather patterns are chaotic, hence unpredictable.
• Irregularity is a fundamental property of nature.
• Many environmental and biological systems are nonlinear and chaotic.
• Nature cannot be dominated or controlled.
How can Partnership Ethics help?

- **To Heal the Earth**, 1999.
- Nature and humanity as "co-tenants of the universe; partners in survival."
Environmental Partnerships

- "Voluntary collaborations among organizations working toward a common objective."
- Avoid acrimony and litigation; achieve cooperative agreements among stakeholders.
- Negotiating table includes business people, planners, minorities, and those who speak for nature.
• Community members, planners and designers, scientists and engineers, work cooperatively with nature and with each other.
• Multicultural teams of men and women work as equal partners with each other.
• Nature’s processes are partners with humanity.
• “Nature Constructed, Nature Revealed” Exhibit.

Design for Governors Island, New York Harbor.

Bedrock as firm ground coexists with landfill as shifting ground—the place of possibilities.

"The voice of displaced soil is the flux that complements firmness and fixity."

Performing arts; walkways, vistas, and ferry docks.
Equity Between Human and Nonhuman Nature

- Maplewood Minnesota. Joan Nassauer, residents, and city engineers redesign runoff and reintroduce wetland and prairie plants.
Equity Between Human and Nonhuman Nature

- Reintroduction of plant communities adds a “touch of wildness” to traditional neighborhoods.
Nature’s Processes in Partnership with Human Design

1912, 1925, 1945, 1965 channeled riverbed.

Proposed reconstruction by Joseph Eades.

• Anacostia River, Bladensburg, Md. “Revealing the Ancient River.” Wetlands remove pollution, runoff.
Nature's Chaotic Unpredictability

Hattiesburg, Mississippi Convention Center.
Edward Blake, Jr. “Nature is a complex pattern.”

Restored sedge meadow, cypress swamp, woodland, and lake. Magnolias, egrets, waterlilies, turtles, and dragonflies.
Nature’s Chaotic Unpredictability

- Yellowstone National Park.
- David Kovacic simulations.
- Ecologies created by fire suppression (1872-1972) vs. management with frequent, cool, ground fires.
Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity

- Louise Mozingo.
- University of California, Berkeley.
- Culturally diverse neighborhood.

European, African, Asian, and Hispanic Americans worked in partnership with each other to restore biodiversity to indigenous oak groves and chaparral.
Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity

• Glenn W. Daniel King Estate Park, Oakland, Ca. Louise Mozingo.
Ecological and Human Health

Extraction of coal left acids and orange iron oxides that blemished the land and poisoned the water.


Settling ponds and limestone channels raise pH, creating clean water. Vegetation echoes colors of treatment ponds.
Ecological and Human Health

- Los Angeles, California, Achva Stein and Norman Millar.

Windows of Opportunity
Conclusion

• Humanity can listen to nature's voice and respond with care and reverence.
• We can work in cooperation with nature as a nonhuman partner.
• A partnership ethic offers the possibility of a healthier, more aesthetically pleasing cultural and natural environment for our own and future generations.
Earthcare

- Image by Teresa Fasolino, 1990.
- Mutual responsibility for the care of the earth.
- Partnership with nature.
The End