
TURTLE ISLAND BIOREGIONAL GATHERING

RESOLUTIONS

(Achieving Plenary Consensus at NABC I-IV; TIBG V-VI)

AGRICULTURE/PERMACULTURE

NABC I

STRATEGY FOR A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE:

Agriculture stems from natural systems and we must maintain a fundamental reverence for, and cooperation with Nature. We seek to create sustainable agricultural systems that are ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just and humane.

Toward achieving a sustainable agriculture we recommend:

1. Practicing all methods of conservation and rehabilitation to establish healthy soil ecosystems which nurture all life.

2. Advancing natural farming methods. Phase out all uses of synthetic chemicals, halt all uses of toxic pesticides and herbicides. Encourage such practices as integrated pest management, companion planting and cover cropping.

3. Maintaining green cover on agricultural lands. Plant tree crops and other perennials on denuded land.

4. Reducing unnecessary agricultural exchange between bioregions. Grow more locally to provide locally.

5. Replacing monocropping by returning to polyculture.

6. Supporting means by which agriculture evolves to a long term sustainability.

7. Encouraging the application of urban agriculture and remove the institutional barriers to this practice.

GENETIC DIVERSITY:

We respect and move to conserve the genetic and ecological diversity of the natural world through publicly available, bioregionally based seed repositories and the preservation and widespread dissemination of all germplasm.

HYDROLOGICAL CYCLE:

By respecting, understanding, and biologically enhancing the flow of water, we can and must reverse the spread of deserts, the emptying of aquifers, and the devastation of farmland through erosion, salinization, and pollution.

ACCESS TO LAND:

To counter the destructive separation of people from their land, work, and food, we support access to land for anyone interested in growing food, no matter what sex, race, or belief. Resources such as information, technology, energy, or funding should be increasingly available for all. We resolve that public policy and individual actions favor these recommendations.

RESOURCE-CONSERVING TECHNOLOGY:

We urge the use of resource-conserving technologies to sustain bioregional agriculture.

FARM/VILLAGE

Human communities need to be integrated with food-producing and natural areas, through community gardens and edible landscaping.

RESEARCH AND EXTENSION:

We support increased research into sustainable agricultural systems, both in our bioregional networks and through coordination with academic institutions, and increased dissemination of that information.

HUNGER:

Bioregional food production is the means for providing sufficient nourishment for all people to eliminate hunger around the planet.

COOPERATIVE MARKETING:

We support the transition from monopolistic to direct and cooperative marketing.

APPROPRIATE RENEWABLE ENERGY:

All resources, including energy, must come from the bioregion. Required energy (fuel, heat, electricity) will be produced by use of appropriate technology and renewable energy. All organic materials (biomass) will be recycled.

ENERGY:

1. Minimize the use of all fossil fuels and all fuel-based materials. Use of biomass should also be minimized since it is best invested in the soil.
2. All energy sources and use will be determined by end use.

PUBLIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. NABC I urges the U.S. Congress to pass the Agricultural Productivity Act, a bill directing the U.S. Department of Agriculture to carry out ecological agricultural research and extension. NABC urges other national, provincial and state governments to adopt similar legislation. [Note:
 2. NABC I urges the passage of clearly defined, national standards for organic foods and provide enforcement powers guaranteeing consumers food free of toxic chemicals.
 3. NABC I urges the re-establishment of the Office of Organic Agriculture in the USDA and similar offices in other national, provincial and state governments.
 4. NABC I supports the creation of a bioregionally-based, sustainable agriculture extension service around the world.
 5. NABC I opposes the destruction of tropical rainforests for any reason and the raising and export of cattle to industrialized countries.
 6. In view of the possible effect of plant patent legislation on the availability of seed and reduction in germplasm, NABC I advocates investigations into, and possible repeal of these laws.

NABC II

Public Policy Recommendations

1. Organic Food: NABC urges the development of clearly defined and bioregionally recognized standards for organic foods, and the distribution and utilization of these standards in our bioregions.

2. Food Irradiation: NABC is opposed to any form of food irradiation because of health and environmental dangers, and we will recognize and patronize only those food suppliers that do not utilize this technology.
3. Plant patenting: NABC does not recognize the self-proclaimed proprietary rights of individuals or corporations to place patents on any of our plant friends which restrict their right to grow or to be propagated freely.
4. Permaculture: NABC urges that people work to identify and use the necessary means for developing bioregional permaculture and food systems, and we encourage the following:
 - a. Enacting measures for protecting small farms.
 - b. Establishing "food parks" and agroforestry projects within bioregions and communities.
 - c. Nurturing a consciousness which permanently protects and preserves land.

Action Plans: Education

To promote a comprehensive public education in food systems and permaculture, the following approaches are recommended to bioregional groups:

1. Prepare specific educational packages using materials from organizations such as the National Gardening Association, Rodale Press, and other worldwide groups.
2. Seek to introduce curriculum materials in elementary, secondary and college levels of public and private schools, community colleges and centers to sponsor workshops. In efforts to initiate such programs, work with the teachers, principals, school boards and superintendents of both rural and urban schools.
3. Urge universities, especially land grant colleges, to begin to shift their basic research towards the creation of appropriate techniques and technologies that will aid small food systems and permaculture rather than agribusiness. Research departments could be encouraged to incorporate research already in progress on gardening and small farms and apply it as models for students. Thus developed, these projects should especially focus on biota specific and/or unique to each bioregion.
4. Actively encourage on-going public education by such means as interpretive displays at food parks, editorials and regular columns in local

newspapers (possibly coordinated with local extension offices), and nutritional education at farmers' markets and direct marketing outlets and natural/organic food stores.

5. Identify, compile and circulate a list of speakers on various aspects of permaculture food systems.

Networking Directory

To facilitate the development of permaculture food systems within each bioregion, we recommend that each bioregion compile a networking directory of useful resources, people, organizations and programs that can contribute to ecologically sound food systems. [Note: A list of potential inclusions followed.]

Fund Raising

Fund raising should be used as a means to raise both money and consciousness about permaculture food systems. [A list of suggested methods followed.]

[The Agriculture/Permaculture/Food Systems Committee did not have resolutions consensed after NABC II and did not meet at NABC III, IV, or VI.]

ARTS AND CULTURE

[The Arts and Culture Committee met at NABC III and IV; TIBG V]

NABC IV

1. We resolve that a rainbow of cultures be represented each time we gather together, and that arts and culture be seen as an integral part of the agenda at every level of meeting.
2. To guarantee that our movement maintain its cultural base, the Arts & Culture Committee would like a representative, when possible, to participate in each Steering Council meeting, and that the Committee be empowered to raise funds in the name of the Congress to make such participation possible.
3. We resolve that any Steering Council discussion involving what could be seen as censorship of artistic or cultural performance include the Arts and Culture Committee.

The Committee feels that censorship should not take place, but that it is appropriate, when faced with limited amounts of time, to focus presentations on bioregional context.

4. We resolve to support and encourage the creation of bioregional directories of artistic and cultural resources on a local level, which could be coordinated to be drawn from on a continental basis. Artists, makers and performers from this list could be brought into schools, meetings, workshops, All Species projects, etc. We would like to have this information available on a continent-wide basis through the Bioregional Skills Exchange Inventory.

An example of this is the SongShare Network, to be coordinated through Stan Slaughter, which will facilitate the exchange of bioregional music. Bioregional groups or individuals could then receive tapes, songbooks, and contact sheets.

5. We resolve that bioregions' artistic or cultural presentations bring special attention to the 500 Years of Resistance and Dignity to be celebrated for the 1992 Turtle Island Bioregional Congress, and for local Congresses and annual events, and that all bioregionalists join with other cultural and political groups in organizing a true celebration of the spirit and history of this Continent.

BIOREGIONAL MOVEMENT

NABC I

WELCOME HOME!

A growing number of people are recognizing that in order to secure the clean air, water and food that we need to healthfully survive, we have to become guardians of the places where we live. People sense the loss in not knowing our neighbors and natural surrounds, and are discovering that the best way to take care of ourselves, and to get to know our neighbors, is to protect and restore our region.

Bioregionalism recognizes, nurtures, sustains and celebrates our local connections with:

Land

Plants and Animals

Springs, rivers, lakes, groundwater and oceans

Air

Families, friends, neighbors

Community

Native traditions

Indigenous systems of production and trade.

It is taking the time to learn the possibilities of place. It is a mindfulness of local environment, history, and community aspirations that leads to a sustainable future. It relies on safe and renewable sources of food and energy. It ensures employment by supplying a rich diversity of services within the community, by recycling our resources, and by exchanging prudent surpluses with other regions. Bioregionalism is working to satisfy basic needs locally, such as education, health care, and self-governance.

The bioregional perspective recreates a widely-shared sense of regional identity founded upon a renewed critical awareness of and respect for the integrity of our ecological communities.

People are joining with neighbors to discuss ways we can work together to:

1. learn what our special local resources are
2. plan how to best protect and use those natural and cultural resources
3. exchange our time and energy to best meet our daily and long-term needs
4. enrich our children's local and planetary knowledge.

Security begins by acting responsibly at home. Welcome home!

[This proclamation has been affirmed by all plenaries since NABC I.]

RESOLUTIONS:

1. We encourage bioregion networking, sharing, and communications on an individual and organizational basis. As a directory is already being compiled of Congress participants and will be distributed at the end of this Congress, no specific organizational form seems necessary. The directory will serve as our organizational tool at this time.

2. NABC I authorizes a continental gathering to be held in 1986, the organization of which is to be facilitated by the Bioregional Project of New Life Farm.

In order to oversee this continental gathering, we suggest a (1986) Steering Council to be formed, the core of which is to be made up of volunteers from NABC I, and which will invite others to participate. It will select (a tentative) format, agenda, and content of the gathering; hold at least one face-to-face meeting before it, and communicate regularly with each other and the movement (using the directory to exchange information and date of meetings, and keep a log of its proceedings).

3. NABC I, realizing the importance of a newsletter to gather and disseminate information to the participants and movement as a whole, authorizes New Life Farm to publish the first (and possibly second) issue of a NABC Newsletter, while searching actively for another group (or groups) willing to take on this function. Suggested subscription price is \$15 a year, and all groups and individuals are encouraged to subscribe, without which the project will never be launched.

4. These tasks (2 & 3) could, if appropriate, be a rotating responsibility of other bioregional groups.

NABC II

1. Because we feel that there are certain next steps that seem necessary and constructive for the bioregional movement at this time, we propose that the Bioregional Movement Committee, as a standing committee, be authorized:

a) to inaugurate the following movement tasks.

b) to find bioregional organizations to try to carry them out; and

c) to keep track of and review the accomplishments of these groups to assure that these tasks are adequately fulfilled.

Tasks (not consensed)

NABC III

The Bioregional Movement Committee was charged at NABC II with inaugurating ongoing functions of the bioregional movement and finding bioregional organizations to carry them out. The congress adopted the following resolutions at NABC III:

Events Primer

That a primer be published on how to produce bioregional events such as congresses, confluences, and camp-outs, including brief descriptions of diverse events staged by several bioregional groups and supporting material. Realistic Living, of the Upper Blackland Prairie, has offered to undertake this work and to make it self-supporting.

Bioregional Bookstore

That one branch of the bioregional bookstore, whose establishment was authorized by NABC II, be transferred from Sun Rock Farm, Ohio River Valley, to Planet Drum Foundation, Shasta. The other bookstore would remain at The New Catalyst, Bridge River valley.

Information Center/Clearinghouse

That there is a continuing need for an information center/clearinghouse for the bioregional movement. It would provide answers to requests for information on bioregional events, congresses, publications, etc., across North America, both within the bioregional movement and for the general public. The office shall be named the Turtle Island Office (TIO) and be staffed by a paid quarter-time office manager. [Approximate annual budget for TIO office follows.]

We expect that the TIO would work toward financial self-sufficiency, but we recommend that some of the money raised by NABC III be allocated as seed money to this project, and that

a collection be taken up this week for others to donate to it as well. This transfers the clearinghouse function after two years of service from New Life Farm, Ozarks, to the South Sound Bioregional Network, Cascadia (Olympia, WA), until NABC IV.

The Voice of the Turtle

That a publication entitled The Voice of the Turtle, intended for communication within the bioregional movement rather than for outreach, be published between congresses. Its editorship will rotate among bioregions. It will include a calendar of bioregional events; reports on progress toward NABC IV; interim committee reports; a round-up of work by local bioregional groups; a section on news from the bioregion where the Turtle is being edited; a resource list, including an order form for the bioregional bookstores; and the Welcome Home statement. Its editorial guidelines will call for pieces to reach across all forms of cultural diversity and to be free of racially, culturally, sexually and species-oppressive language and graphics, and will encourage non-prose contributions. Its Editorial Board will consist of six culturally, racially, geographically and gender-wise diverse individuals, each of whom will serve once as primary editor, twice as a reviewing editor, and likewise as contributing editors for each of the six issues. The primary editor of an issue will make a preliminary selection of pieces and distribute them to two reviewing editors for comment and revision (remaining materials to be forwarded to the next primary editor), and then prepare and send the finished copy to the publishing center; in case of disagreements, they may be referred to and decided by the entire Editorial Board.

Primary editors will be responsible for sending finished copy to a publishing center (Ron Grunt has volunteered to serve this function for the first two years), which will see to typesetting, layout, production, printing, and distribution. In cases of disagreement, questions may be referred to the Editorial Board, which shall be the final arbiter. The publisher will be responsible for the finances of the publication, which should be self-financing, through sliding-scale subscriptions (suggested retail price on a sliding scale of \$5 to \$15 per year), grants, and/or other means (not,

at least at present, including advertisements). Editorial and production staff will be paid commensurate movemental stipends.

Skills Exchange

That a Skills Exchange be established to share knowledge and skills within individual bioregions and among them, decentralized to five or so separate bioregional offices that have volunteered to do so. These skills exchanges will gather the names and qualifications of individuals and groups, such as educators, artists, speakers, permaculturists, energy experts, etc. They will enter them in files and discs, maintain that list, and make it available to qualified interested applicants. Coordination: a representative of each skills exchange will voluntarily serve on a group to oversee these functions (identified at present: Phil Thiel, Great Lakes; David Levine, Leaning Alliance/Hudsonia; Juan-Tomas Rehbock, Shasta; and Rich Niebaum, Kansas Area Watershed); David Levine will serve as the liaison with the Bioregional Movement Committee. Finances: self-financing, through user fees (money or skills) and local fund-raising.

Compilation: entries from all NABC standing committees of people they know in their skills areas, from all participants in NABC III who wish to submit, and from local sources hereafter. Each exchange will maintain a list and contribute to the full list with updated entries.

Nothing in this resolution should be construed to prevent or discourage any bioregion from organizing a skills exchange on the bioregional level.

Funds Committee

That a Funds Committee be authorized to serve between congresses to raise seed money and supplementary funds for the various projects identified by the preceding Congress, as near as possible to the amounts set by that Congress, while recognizing that these projects inspired by the NABC should eventually be self-sustaining. (E.g., if NABC III authorizes \$6000 to be raised for the Turtle Island Office, the Funds Committee will try to find ways for that money to be raised, including promoting and/or overseeing self-financing projects by TIO.) Local and bioregional groups could also ask the Funds Committee to help them raise funds (e.g.

by providing expertise with grant-writing or contacts with benefit performers). The committee should include people who can identify likely funding sources, who have experience with grant-writing, and who have experience with various fund-raising methods. It will not be empowered to raise funds for any projects not authorized by the Congress. Any funds raised over and above amounts authorized by the Congress will be set aside for disbursement by the next Congress.

The Funds Committee is authorized to raise the following amounts between NABC III and NABC IV: Turtle Island Office: \$12,100; Bioregional Bookstores: \$1,000; Events Primer: \$200; Skills Exchange: \$5,000; Directory of Bioregional Groups: \$1,000; Bibliography: \$200. Total: \$19,500. Turtle Island Office will be the top priority. All money is designed as seed money toward financial self-sufficiency.

STEERING COUNCIL

[The Congress adopted by consensus the following statements regarding the roles of various bodies as they relate to the congresses, to the bioregional movement, and each other:]

1) The Steering Council

- forms at NABC on an open, voluntary basis.
- is charged with the responsibility of putting on the next NABC.

• the Core Group has been those among the Steering Council able and willing to attend most Steering Council meetings. Continuity between Congresses is ensured by some Steering Council members staying on the following Steering Council.

• During the Congress, a subcommittee of the Steering Council is charged with listening to and responding to concerns raised during the Congress.

2) The Site Committee

A site of the next NABC is chosen at NABC, the site proponents sitting on the Site Committee. It is charged with:

- finding a suitable site for the next NABC.
- deciding on a suitable format.
- undertaking the major administrative, financial and logistical tasks of hosting the NABC.
- all in consultation with the Steering Council and subject to its agreement and modification.

3) The Congress Committee

Convened for the first time at NABC III, and authorized as a standing committee for the purpose of the self-conscious evolution and adaptation of the Congress itself, as an event. Round robin correspondence will provide for a "think tank" to examine the form of the Congress and make recommendations concerning its structure, functions, etc.

4) NABC IV is charged with long-term structural evaluation of the Steering Council and decision-making at NABCs.

Committee Authority on Policy and Policy Statements

The North American Bioregional Congress resolves that the NABC Steering Council, the Site Committee, and the Bioregional Movement Committee continue to fulfill their respective tasks as previously authorized by consent of Congress in plenary, and that the degree of decision-making authority that these committees exercise be allowed to continue in regard to their roles in support of NABC and the respective bioregions.

However, in regard to any policy statements considered important or that may be solicited of NABC committees between Congresses, no committee shall be authorized to make such policy statements; but rather they should support the decentralized nature of the bioregional movement by referring, as soon as possible, relevant information about potential policy statements to the respective bioregions, through such means as the Turtle Island Office.

NABC IV

Vision Statement

We recognize that the Third World War--the war against the biosphere--is well under way, and that the forces of cultural and biotic extinction may prevail. We believe that this war is rooted in our present human social arrangements. We believe that the Bioregional Movement represents a real hope for restructuring those arrangements in a pattern that is respectful and nurturing of all life forms and life places. Therefore, the Steering Council intends to foster the Bioregional Movement because we are convinced of the urgency of our mission.

In order to accurately and fairly reflect the whole continent, our biannual Congresses will henceforth be called Turtle Island Bioregional Congresses (TIBC).

There will be a nine-member Steering Council whose transportation to Steering Council meetings will be paid or financially assisted. There will also be a larger council called "the Steering Council at large" who come to meetings at their own expense.

Job Description for a Council Member

A. Attend all three semi-annual Steering Council meetings, if air fare or other transportation costs are provided. (These face-to-face Steering Council meetings will be scheduled between biannual TIBC's. These will be scheduled in consultation with all members. If financing is not available, telecommunication meetings could be held.)

B. If the attendance of a member is not feasible, that member shall select and recruit an alternate of his or her choice to function at the Steering Council in his or her place.

C. To raise or encourage the raising of money in the name of TIBC.

D. To supervise the storage and expenditure of this money.

E. To hire, supervise and dismiss, if necessary, Turtle Island Office (TIO) management staff.

F. To give overall monitoring to TIBC services.

G. To work with the TIBC Site Committee in setting up the next Congress.

H. Each member will take responsibility to be thoroughly informed in all the traditions, history and operations of TIBC.

I. Each member will abide by the policy decisions of the TIBC and will view all Steering Council responsibilities as administration service to the TIBC. The TIBC as a whole is the policy making body, and every two years chooses the nine Steering Council members for the following two years.

J. Each member, at his or her own expense, will promise to attend the next TIBC.

K. The Steering Council is expected to present to TIBC V proposals for a form of continental Congress and Steering Council that is representative of the locally-organized bioregional Congresses.

Goals

1. To do everything necessary to assure the occurrence of TIBC V.
2. To insure that all the work of the Steering Council and Bioregional Movement organizing is informed by the need to make the movement diverse and inclusive of a rainbow of people on Turtle Island and all of the Americas (America).
3. To draw up the criteria and methodology to implement a rainbow representational structure of the Steering council.
4. To write job descriptions for the TIO staff.

Selection of the Steering Council

Volunteers for the position of interim Steering Council and the Steering Council-At-Large between NABC IV and the end of the TIBC V are requested from the Plenary of NABC IV. One may become a member of the Steering Council-at-Large now or at a later time. If more than nine candidates for the Steering Council emerge, the candidates will decide with the help of the current Steering Council which of them will become members of the Council.

This process will be guided by the principle of representation that is truly reflective of the diversity of life on this continent. The Council will select personnel and locale for the Turtle Island Office before they leave the site of NABC IV. Membership in the Steering Council shall be approved by the plenary of NABC IV before it disbands.

Turtle Island Office

It shall be a first priority of the Steering Council to assure the existence of an information center/clearinghouse called Turtle Island Office (TIO). The Steering Council will meet this priority by splitting any existing funds equally between its own expenses and the expenses of the Turtle Island Office up to the amount of \$6,000 each with a \$6,000 limit for the Steering Council. This amount is estimated to be enough to assure the transportation of nine Steering Council members to three meetings. This amount also covers a minimum quarter-time budget for TIO. After this \$12,000 level is reached, funds will be dispensed as needed.

Financial Policy

The Site Committee, after paying all expenses of the current Congress, including the publishing of the proceedings, will transfer remaining monies to the supervision of the Steering Council.

As trustees with the comprehensive knowledge of needs in their care, the Steering Council is to be entrusted to allocate funds with the following priorities:

1) First priority is the reservation of a site for TIBC V. Funds for this will be transferred to the account of the new Site Committee.

2) Second priority is to enable the TIO to begin operation and to do fundraising in cooperation with the Steering Council.

3) The third priority is to enable full attendance at Steering Council meetings.

The Steering Council will further prioritize expenses, create a budget, and allocate funds to other various accounts for projects which serve the bioregions and TIBGC, such as the Site Committee and publications. TIO will maintain open books and submit financial reports for publication on a semi-annual basis.

The Steering Council will explore ways to reduce dependence on money as a medium of exchange.

Site Committee

The Site Committee, in consultation with the Steering Council and subject to its agreement and modification, is charged with:

- finding a suitable site for the next TIBC.
- deciding on a suitable format.
- undertaking the major administrative, financial and logistical tasks of hosting TIBC.

TIBC V

TIBC V is charged with long-term structural evaluation of the Steering Council and decision-making at TIBCs.

Bilingual Congresses

The Bioregional Movement Committee recognizes that importance of moving towards partial bilingual congresses and will commit energies to make this possible, starting with:

- a. Bilingual outreach material
- b. Bilingual congress brochure
- c. Bilingual registration materials
- d. Establishment of a bilingual committee to add translation skills to this year's bioregional directory, and make a list of members available.

TIBC Brochure

To date, bioregionalists have had a certain degree of success with political and cultural activities, but our basic message has failed to reach the vast majority of people on the planet. This is primarily because the bioregional vision deals with a complexity of wholistic images that are mostly inaccessible to the average person in spite of, or because of, our eloquent and poetic resolutions on everything from ecofeminism to a hydrogen economy.

We resolve that the bioregional vision be distilled into a mission statement and concise statements of purpose, easily understood by anyone, augmented by the "Welcome Home" statement, a definition of "bioregion" and of "Bioregionalism." This will be printed as a trilingual brochure in Spanish, English and French, and made available for distribution through the Turtle Island Office, contingent upon funding.

Mission Statement

Bioregional efforts are as varied and diverse as the people attempting them, and as the bioregions in which they occur. In general, our mission can be stated as three-fold:

Cultural Efforts, which serve to create or regenerate sustainable, compassionate, Earth-centered lifestyles and cultures that will supplant exploitative practices;

Political Efforts, which serve as damage control to heal the wounds that exploitative practices continue to inflict on the planet, as well as to create the benign, nurturing institutions and associations that will foster an ecological partnership culture; and

Outreach Efforts, that serve to inspire as many people as soon as possible to recognize the importance of, and to live by the guiding bioregional principles as stated above.

Statement of Purpose

A Declaration of Bioregional Autonomy, recognizing the biological, geological, climatic and cultural uniqueness and diversity of each bioregion the world over, and their right of decentralized self-governance.

The Affirmation of Equality of All Species, recognizing that the flourishing of each species depends on the flourishing of all species in balance with each other, and that human lifestyle and life-support decisions be made with consideration of human impact on the entire biosphere, and in accordance with ecological principles.

The creation of sustainable, compassionate, Earth-centered societies, recognizing that the right to exist of the human species is no greater than that of any other species, and that we must control our population numbers and exploitative consumption patterns to reflect this fact.

What is a Bioregion?

A Bioregion, or "life region," is the basic geographic unit that integrates human governance within ecological principles. It is an area of "soft perimeters" characterized by similar flora and fauna, climate, and geology, and drained by a cohesive system of watersheds.

What is Bioregionalism?

Bioregionalism embodies heightened awareness of place. As an emerging way of thinking and being in the world, it values the local and regional: We see the revitalization of places, people and local cultures as the only sure way of healing the planet. We respect the natural boundaries of bioregions over artificial, human-imposed boundaries. Learning to live within the limits of the place we inhabit in a sustainable manner teaches us to care for the land, not to exploit it.

Rooted in ecological wisdom, the Bioregional Movement encompasses all our relations: with the Earth, with other life forms and with each other. Bioregionalists value those ideas and skills that will help us recreate our world upon a new basis. Thus we value permaculture, watershed management, home ecology and sustainable forestry as practical skills, alongside more philosophical efforts to define appropriate forms of community, spirituality, and ways of working together across artificial social boundaries of race, class and gender.

Politically, the Bioregional Movement is decentralist and "green" in orientation. But its key understanding is cultural: the knowledge that each of us inhabits a "terrain of

consciousness" very much influenced by the place in which we dwell, the work we do, and the beings with whom we share our lives. In this context, the re-creation of caring and more sustainable cultures becomes the real work of our time.

TIBG V

The resolution by the Bioregional Movement Committee to lay itself down was consensed in plenary.

FORESTS

NABC IV

Heart and Soul of the Bioregion: The Evolutionary Preserve

The forests and the other natural habitats of the bioregions of Turtle Island are critical life support systems for inhabiting species and for planet Earth. A bioregion involves all life forms--not just humans and their needs. The primary basis of any ecosystem is the plant life. Most human problems are directly related to failure to live according to the ecological principles of local ecosystems.

Learning to understand native habitats and live in balance with all life are key to achieving lasting solutions to human problems such as sexism, racism, violence, humanistic materialism and anthropocentrism. For example, in native ecosystems there is not the extent of power hierarchy--domination of the many by the few--which human cultures have created and which are the basis of these "isms."

Native habitats are also the soul of each bioregion. If our desire is to create land-based cultures that are responsive to the natural principles of our regions, the remnants of once-great native habitats are the foundation of the bioregional vision. They are the reality against which all our other constructs and actions must be balanced. They are of the first priority and must be preserved at any cost--or restored if they have already been degraded or lost.

Industrial growth society has penetrated to the deepest depths of our bioregions. We must resist now to preserve what remains of undisturbed ecosystems.

To this end we propose that it be adopted as goals of this Congress that:

1. The inhabitants of each bioregion identify and preserve (or restore) large blocks of native habitat areas to be kept as "heart of the bioregion" evolutionary preserves capable of supporting all natural processes and full complements of all the native species and natural communities of flora and fauna, including the largest predator species. These evolutionary preserves shall not be subject to commercial exploitation. They shall be returned to a roadless condition, and all human use must conform to the constraints of habitat. This is not going to be easy.
2. The evolutionary preserve(s) in each region shall be connected by numerous wide, wild migration corridors to other preserve areas in neighboring regions and to the seas. These could be models of interregional cooperation, like the Preserve Appalachian Wilderness (PAW) proposal presently being advocated in regions along the length of the Appalachian Mountain chain.
3. Around these evolutionary preserves shall be a buffer zone in which traditional native practices, ecologically benign activities and light human occupancy may take place.
4. We must accept the task of stopping all pollution in our regions (both point source and non-point source) that is causing atmospheric deposition, global climate change and the destruction of forest and aquatic ecosystems.

Saving Natural Habitats

An elite segment of the human population is destroying the forests and other natural habitats of Turtle Island by fragmentation, pollution, commercial exploitation, overuse and human-caused global climate change. The stresses of human impact are passed on to be absorbed by the natural world, but the planetary environment can stand no further abuse. Therefore, each region of Turtle Island is suffering from the effects of human overpopulation and destructive technology.

The first requirement for a truly land-based culture is to bring our own species within the carrying capacity of our regions to support human life. Unless we can reduce our impact to levels within each region's carrying capacity, we will irreparably disrupt evolutionary processes

and destroy our home bioregions and others as they presently exist.

Understanding the idea of bioregions offers a conceptual handle on the problem of carrying capacity limits. The Bioregional Movement can perform a great service to the Movement as a whole by providing a context within which the question of carrying capacity can be examined, understood and dealt with.

Specific Proposals

1. For humans, our bioregions serve as a habitat, a niche. Within our bioregions, we have the opportunity and responsibility to understand and to act on the problem of carrying capacity. Precisely because these questions are so critical, the necessary decisions are going to be difficult to arrive at and carry out. Therefore, we must recognize that people have the right to derive solutions only for the region in which they live, as these solutions are likely to be regionally specific.

To determine what is an ecologically realistic carrying capacity in a region, the inhabitants of that region need to begin historical, economic and ecological surveys of that bioregion to determine levels of human occupancy and technology that are consistent with the integrity of our bioregions and the habitat demands of all native species of flora and fauna--especially large predators.

We also need to examine the lifestyles and habits of human beings (regional self-sufficiency, import/export ratios, levels of consumption and technology) in our regions to determine our impact on the people and natural systems of other regions. The concept of carrying capacity offers a means to describe and counter the economic and biological imperialism that is currently the dominant practice in most of the bioregions of Turtle Island.

According to the "Shit-Rolls-Downhill Principle:" when the carrying capacity of a region is exceeded, the resultant stress is passed on--first to poor and less powerful human beings, and ultimately to the natural world. Strategies to reach carrying capacity must include the dismantling of unbalanced and oppressive power hierarchies.

2. In our regions, we need to practice conservation and simplify our demands as

individuals and communities to lessen our impact on natural life support systems.

3. We need to develop ecologically safe systems and methods, and substitute these for poisonous and dangerous technologies presently in use. (However, inundation for hydro-electric power projects, geothermal energy extraction, forest biomass energy sources and overuse of forest products are not acceptable substitutes.)

4. Individually and as a society, we as inhabitants of Turtle Island must immediately wean ourselves from our disastrous dependency on fossil fuels and other non-renewable energy sources which encourage levels of population and technological growth much higher than ecologically feasible.

5. Let bioregional people promote humane methods (birth control, respect for the death process, etc.) to gain a negative rate of human population replacement throughout the continent.

Within our bioregions, it is also our responsibility to educate everyone about the severity of the present crisis so that the difficult decision-making that must be done is as informed and widespread as possible. It is a matter of record that when women have achieved economic independence and reproductive choice, birth rates have declined.

This is not to suggest endorsement of eugenics programs, forced sterilization of minority people, or other oppressive measures. The dominant culture has used situations of overpopulation to further oppress powerless minorities. This is an abuse of power and only exacerbates existing problems by further entrenching greedy and unconscionable power blocs.

6. There is a need for a committee within the bioregional movement to:

a) encourage the process of analysis within bioregions;

b) help people to develop strategies for their own regions that are specific to that region;

c) evaluate causes and effects of impacts on natural systems;

d) help networking between regional committees and between the bioregional movement and other concerned organizations.

This group will have full committee status if committee work is a part of the Turtle Island Bioregional Congress V.

We are a species so out of balance that reaching ecologically realistic carrying capacity levels in our bioregions is going to be a long process. But we must begin now to challenge the ideology of growth.

Suggested Actions

[Many of these are no longer current.]

NABC III

Resolutions of NABC I and II were reaffirmed, with the following additions:

1. The pronounced climatic changes now occurring through the planet have been triggered in part by the destruction of the Earth's green mantle. Trees are the major regulator of fresh water circulation between the oceans, atmosphere, soil, and surface water systems. To restore balance to the Earth's weather and hydrologic cycles, the role of the tropical rain forests and other major forests must be recognized, and greater protection and restoration of these areas be given utmost priority. Within each region we will work specifically to restore wild zones in and around cities, suburbs and farmlands.
2. The formation of stewardship or "watchdog" groups composed of local people, forest workers, and governmental and private agencies to holistically reestablish and preserve healthy forest communities.
3. Promoting the use of conservation easements by individual landowners and the creation of land trusts in order to preserve wooded greenbelts in our cities, suburbs and rural areas.
4. Rezoning in each community to strongly restrict the bulldozing and use of forests.
5. Stopping all old-growth cutting.
6. That we have more direct and regular communion with the forest ecosystem in order to augment our knowledge and appreciation.
7. That we teach ourselves and others how our consumerist lifestyles underlie the destruction of forests and make every effort to change.

NABC II

[The Forest Committee reaffirmed the NABC I resolutions, to be amended later.]

NABC I

1. We strongly support conservation and recycling wherever possible to reduce waste of wood and paper products.
2. We urge the fuller utilization of wood at all stages from thinning to logging to milling and greater attention given to management of forests for products derived from non-timber trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants and fungi.
3. We recommend re-examination of the philosophical basis for corporate ownership and management of large tracts of forest lands. We feel control and responsibility for the forest resource should ultimately rest in the hands of an ecologically aware, local citizenry. We urge the formation of land trusts and land-based forestry cooperatives to further this goal.
4. We support incorporation into our elementary, secondary and college level education, elements necessary to create respect and understanding of forests systems and their inseparability from our own well-being. We also urge the creation of education and training of young people on a regional basis for the accomplishment of regeneration and restoration of our damaged forest systems and the creation of a wholistically educated, professional cadre of foresters for the future.
5. We urge that the processing of wood products be returned wherever possible to locales and that distribution be local or determined locally on the basis of sustainability of the forest.
6. We encourage the development of worker-owned cooperatives, and of stewardship contracts for land management of public and private lands.
7. The urban forest should be considered and developed as a viable source of food, fiber, fuel and lumber as well as improving the quality of life for all species in the urban environment.
8. Because of the wide diversity of the forest, we feel that no single management technique is valid in all situations. Practices such as clearcutting, road-building, and highgrading are consistently overused. They would be replaced wherever appropriate by site-adapted techniques that promote sustainability. We urge all-age, multiple-species management.
9. There is a need to enlarge the scope and aim of scientific research to encompass the depth and

complexity of forest systems; for this research to be focused on appropriate and sustainable solutions to practical problems; and for the responsibility of this research to be shared by forestry workers and related industries.

10. We urge preservation of all designated and defacto wilderness forest areas in North America. There must be management of other old-growth stands on a long-term rotation and sustained yield basis. Isolated unique stands should also be protected. The destruction of tropical rain forest in Central America and elsewhere in the world should stop.

11. Forestry, agriculture and wildlife management are inextricably linked, and management practices in these areas should complement rather than hinder each other.

12. We feel that the reforestation of large areas of our continent is a matter of utmost importance for the people of North America.

Earth Summit Working Group

TIBC V

TIBC V urges non-governmental organizations and citizens' groups assembling at the Earth Summit in Rio to include the diverse and life-affirming principles of bioregionalism in any agreements which result. TIBC V also encourages members to take home and act upon the message about the consequences of Earth Summit, GATT and so-called "free trade," which undermine the very conditions for bioregional living.

The Turtle island Bioregional Congress V calls for land reform throughout Turtle Island. Land reform is the redistribution of land in the control of the government and of a privileged few, for the common good.