



CENTER FOR EARTH LEADERSHIP

MIDYEAR REPORT

2008 | FORGING CITIZEN LEADERSHIP TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

AT THE CENTER FOR EARTH LEADERSHIP, we have a singular focus. We train, motivate, and support citizens, in all walks of life, who seek to be leaders to a sustainable future.

In 2006 Al Gore's message about global warming produced a quantum leap in public awareness and concern about warming and ecological degradation generally. It also activated a growing number of citizens who wish to assume a leadership role in creating a sustainable future.

To transform this heightened interest into tangible initiatives, in May 2006 we began creating the Center. It is a natural extension of our lifelong environmental work, including our full-time work together since 1993 as founders of the Center, the Northwest Earth Institute, and the Oregon Natural Step Network.

The underlying premise of the Center is quite simple. We live in a consumer culture that promotes excess consumption of energy and resources and generates toxic by-products. To achieve a sustainable future, the culture itself must be transformed.

To be sure, public policy and technology will contribute to the transformation of culture. But the real drivers will be committed citizens, assuming a leadership role. We call that "earth leadership." In the pages that follow, we describe how we encourage and develop earth leadership.

At the heart of our work is hope – our highest vision of the possible. We Northwest citizens will create a sustainable region where ecological integrity is paramount, the quality of life is not tied to consumption, and we care deeply about our unique watershed. In doing so, we will be a model for the nation.

With hope, we do not concern ourselves with probabilities, and we are not discouraged by bad news, which is sure to come. To the contrary, we are uplifted by each citizen initiative that adds to this wonderful mosaic of cultural change and enriches our lives as we all move collectively through this era of great urgency and anticipation.



The Center for Earth Leadership's staff include (from left) Erin Shaw, Emily Cain, Jeanne Roy, and Dick Roy

Jeanne and Dick Roy, Co-Founders

Center Programs Activate Citizen Leadership

Primary Programs

- Agent of Change (class)
- Assessing Your Ecological Footprint (class)
- Earth Leadership Training (seminar)
- Local Organizing and Practice of Hope (occasional workshops)
- Home EcoParty (2 hour event)



Change agent Jill Inabara

Agent of Change Class

Session #1

Cultural Change and Circles of Influence

Session #2

The Role and Vision of the Change Agent

Session #3

Understanding Your Circle

Session #4

Strategies for Change

Session #5

Implementing Your Plan

Session #6

Maintaining Momentum

The heart of our work is activating citizen leadership. To do that, we enlist, train, motivate, and support those who seek to be leaders in creating a sustainable future.

Our principal course, *How to Be an Agent of Change in Your Circle of Influence*, illustrates our approach. Each of us is a member of numerous circles of influence, such as a workplace, neighborhood, church, school community, interest group, or other constellation of people with an affinity based on a shared interest. The circle is an ideal arena for work of the agent of change.

After training 14 groups, with enrollment of 10 to 16 in each group, our agents are working hard in their respective circles. Several examples illustrate their impact.

Jill is the mother of Duncan, a first grader at Skyline Elementary School. After completing the Agent-of-Change course, with the support of the Skyline school administration Jill formed a green team of parents. As an early step, the team formed an after-school Outdoor Club where the students have participated in gardening and composting, learned about native plants, and perfected a classroom recycling system. For the cafeteria, the team has set a goal of zero waste. Food waste is salvaged for chicken and pig feed, washable lunch trays have replaced polystyrene foam ones, and families are encouraged to send durable lunch containers to school rather than disposables.

As changes occur at Skyline, ecology is integrated into the lives of students who learn new ways of living. In turn, the culture of the entire school community takes on a new dimension, and the impact goes well beyond the walls of the school.

Erin's circle of influence is her immediate neighborhood. After hosting a home eco-party for neighbors (another Center program), Erin and her husband organized regular follow-up gatherings as a first step in their "green your block" initiative, where each neighbor pledges to make three lifestyle changes each year, eventually "certifying" their block as a green block. Known as "soup nights," the neighbors bring their own bowls and spoons to each meeting for homemade soup.

At church where she works, **Dimitra** has organized a three-pronged initiative to introduce more sustainable practices in the office and administrative areas, the weekly



Waste sorters at Skyline Elementary School

coffee hour, and the annual festival. In the process, she is engaging the church administration and congregation in a creative way.

Her first step was to introduce a comprehensive recycling system by placing 22 bins in convenient locations with flyers encouraging people to recycle. Disposable plates, cups and utensils have been replaced with permanent items in the kitchen and break room. A cost analysis is underway for replacing disposable cups and plates used during the after-service coffee hour and at special events. Dimitra has also scheduled an energy audit, contacted the city about acquiring appropriate recycling receptacles for the annual festival, and recruited members for a church green team.

Jill, Erin, and Dimitra are using creativity within their circles of influence. As they do so, they not only change the culture of the circle, but they are instrumental in changing the culture of the greater Portland metropolitan area from the grassroots up. In other words, they are pulling the entire community to a higher level of engagement in sustainable practices.

To support our agents of change, the Center has created an active Agents' Network. From course participants, the Network now includes trained presenters to teach the course, mentors to work with participants taking the course, resource experts organized around circle type, such as schools, and an experienced trainer. Over the next year, to replicate the Agent Program, the Center will introduce it in an Oregon community outside of Portland.

Center Projects to Foster Leadership

As a secondary focus, the Center organizes projects to foster leadership within groups where leadership potential has not been fully realized. Our two active projects are Lawyers for a Sustainable Future (OLSF) and Psychology for a Sustainable Future (PSF).

OLSF (Lawyers for a Sustainable Future)

As a lawyer, in 2006 Co-Founder Dick Roy observed that the legal profession was standing at the sidelines of the sustainability movement. To address this concern, he organized three focus groups of 43 lawyers, which provided the impetus to create OLSF with the following mission:

Oregon lawyers using professional skills and knowledge in service to future generations and the earth.

OLSF is now nationally recognized as the leading statewide initiative of lawyers focused on forging a sustainable culture. To accomplish goals, OLSF has organized five task force groups. Two are highlighted in this report.

The **Laws Task Force** assesses existing and proposed laws and regulations through the lens of sustainability. As its first project, the task force drafted landmark legislation (HB 2826), enacted into law in 2007, which explicitly allows a corporation to include the following in its articles of incorporation:

A provision authorizing or directing the corporation to conduct the business of the corporation in a manner that is environmentally and socially responsible.

Building on that success, OLSF now has several subgroups looking at issues pertinent to a sustainable future including corporate governance more broadly, the integrity of science that supports environmental decision-making, building codes, and the expanded use of the cooperative as an entity for locally owned business.

The **Office Practices Task Force** has implemented a four-step strategy to propel Portland into a national leadership role in adopting more sustainable law office practices.

Step 1. The task force created six tools to green the law office which are posted on the Center Web site. These are recognized nationally for their user-friendly design.

Step 2. OLSF has created an informal sustainability network of 45 Portland law firms, each with a lawyer champion and, in most cases, a legal administrator with formal responsibility within the firm.

Step 3. The task force has organized a team of experienced lawyers and administrators who will visit firms to advise them on how to introduce a successful sustainability initiative.

Step 4. OLSF has enrolled lawyers from 30 law firms in an intensive, two-month Earth Leadership Seminar. In most cases, the lawyer becomes a champion within his or her firm for pursuing sustainable practices.



PSF (Psychology for a Sustainable Future)

Psychology and mental health inform many key issues we face in transforming our consumer culture into a life-sustaining culture. What is the psychological impact of the consumer culture including the commercialization of childhood? How do we deal with the increase in bad news related to global warming and ecological degradation? To remain empowered to effect change, how do we avoid denial, fatalism, and escapism?

To coalesce interest in these important topics, in 2007 the Center organized a major conference at Lewis & Clark, the Psychology-Ecology-Sustainability Conference. About 200 mental health professionals and interested individuals spent three days exploring topics.

A number of ongoing initiatives flowed from the conference, coordinated by a steering committee. For example, the Commercialization of Childhood Committee has developed and field tested a presentation on the impact of commercialization on children, from the use of schools to promote consumption and brand loyalty for products like Coke and Pepsi to TV ads targeting toddlers.

A second conference will be held at Lewis & Clark in 2009.

Law office tools

- Model Law Office Policy
- Sustainable Practices in the Law Office
- Best Practices of Office Building Management
- Guidelines for Tenant Improvements
- Lunch Vendor Guidelines
- Planning Green Events, Offsite Meetings, & Retreats

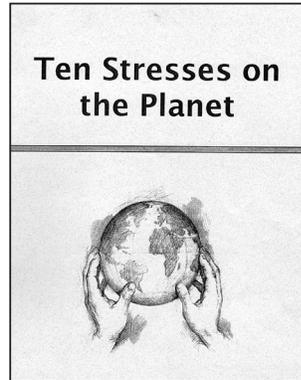
“Perhaps it is because they are closer to the polar ice cap than we are, but some Oregon lawyers have gotten well out front of Californians ... The Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future Web site has a handy model for a law office sustainability policy with easy to follow instructions on how to reduce energy waste in your office ...”

– Jeff Bleich, President
State Bar of California

Tools for Earth Leadership

Publications

The Center creates practical publications for use by earth leaders. An example is *Ten Stresses on the Planet*, the first publication for the general public to outline major human-caused impacts on the planet. It was developed for those who wish to be well informed about the impact of human activity



on Earth's natural systems. *Ten Stresses* includes a compilation of key facts in ten chapters: Degradation of the Oceans, Land Conversion, Loss of Topsoil, Loss of Biodiversity, Invasive Species, Global Warming, Ozone Hole, Toxic Chemicals, Air Pollution, and Loss of Fresh Water. It also contains a chapter, "Personal Practices to Save Ecosystems," which describes high

priority actions – the ones that will have the greatest effect.

As an example, in the chapter on oceans, the reader comes to understand the nature of human-caused stresses: destructive fishing methods, overfishing, pollution, warming and excess carbon dioxide, and what is being done to mitigate the impact.

Gatherings

Two years ago Jeanne Roy organized a group of musicians and artists to plan Honor the Earth celebrations, which were held several times in 2007 and 2008. The format consists of meditative songs, readings, and quiet reflective time for individuals who wish to express gratitude, acknowledge their concern, and find inspiration in community. This initiative has evolved into an Earth Day Celebration that the Center sponsors with the First Unitarian Church. Musical groups, nature photographers, and florists contribute their talents, making this a highlight of our year.



319 SW Washington
Suite 400
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 227-2315
info@earthleaders.org
www.earthleaders.org

Staff

Dick Roy, *Co-Director*
Jeanne Roy, *Co-Director*
Emily Cain, *Program Coordinator*
Erin Shaw, *Administrative Assistant*
Jill Inahara, *Agent Project*

Printed on recycled paper.

The Premises of Earth Leadership

1. Within the Northwest, citizens must provide the leadership to create a truly sustainable culture. In doing so, we must act with urgency and hope. The time is now.
2. The path to a sustainable future is not clear. We know it will require a significant reduction in per capita use of energy, resources, and toxic chemicals, including those used in production, transportation, and final disposition of products.
3. As citizen leaders, we can begin work tomorrow in three arenas: (a) we can reduce our personal impact on the earth; (b) we can be agents of change in our circles of influence such as workplaces, neighborhoods, and schools; and (c) we can make demands for change on others such as elected officials, businesses, or mutual funds, and other entities where we have the standing of constituent.
4. As humans, we are not well equipped for this era of global threats to the natural world. We do not readily respond to threats that seem remote in time and space. Nevertheless, each of us has the capacity to be a motivated, self-actualized creator of a sustainable culture. The ultimate issue is motivation.
5. Earth leadership is being intentional, within personal circumstances, in taking steps to create your vision of a sustainable culture. No step is too small. No vision is too grand.