



Becoming a Partner Organization with the Northwest Earth Institute

We thank you for your interest in more broadly engaging your community in the Northwest Earth Institute discussion courses. We invite you to consider becoming a more formal partner of NWEI. Below is information and background regarding NWEI's North American Network of volunteers and organizations, as well as guidelines for becoming a more formal partner. Please contact any member of the Outreach Team at 503.227.2807 or contact@nwei.org to further discuss options and to finalize partnership details.

About NWEI

The Northwest Earth Institute is a recognized national leader in the development of innovative programs that empower individuals and organizations to protect the Earth. NWEI offers seven discussion guides for small groups that can be implemented in workplaces, homes, libraries, faith centers, neighborhoods and community centers, or anywhere groups wish to gather. The study guides are a tremendous educational and community building resource for those working to promote and create a sustainable future. Course topics include ***Voluntary Simplicity, Choices for Sustainable Living, Global Warming: Changing CO₂urse, Exploring Deep Ecology, Discovering a Sense of Place, Healthy Children-Healthy Planet, and Menu for the Future.*** Please visit www.nwei.org for a complete listing of discussion course programs and descriptions of each discussion course.

The Northwest Earth Institute is a non-profit organization working to *Inspire people to take responsibility for Earth* through small group dialogue. Since 1993 over 100,000 participants throughout North America have gathered in groups to explore the critical issues of our times through dialogue with others. We hope to work with you in the years ahead!

“The innovative work of the Northwest Earth Institute is critical at this time. A motivated mainstream must move the nation into an era of sustainability.”
- David Brower, Founder Earth Island Institute



NATIONAL EARTH INSTITUTE NETWORK BACKGROUND AND VISION

Original Purpose of NWEI. NWEI founders' original goal was "to work together as volunteers in the Northwest to encourage the emergence of grassroots leadership to a sustainable culture." Integral to this culture would be three themes: *deep respect for the earth; the practice of simplicity to enrich life and reduce impact on the earth; and a commitment to live fully in and to protect one's place.*

NWEI's original goal was to develop programs that would facilitate profound and enduring change in people's values, attitudes, habits, and actions. Because group process is helpful for those who seek to make such changes, the NWEI programs are offered in a group setting.

Background on the Earth Institute Network. The Network was conceived (1) to provide a framework for NWEI to share its programs and processes with interested individuals and groups throughout North America (2) to develop a dynamic network of groups and organizations offering earth institute programs (and local programs) with a shared sense of purpose, and (3) to become a visible agent of cultural change in North America.

The constellation of those served by the Network includes the following:

- ***Local Community Organizers.*** Interested individuals or organizations that bring earth institute discussion courses to a community or region.
- ***Affiliate/Partners.*** Course participants may elect to offer the courses more widely in local communities through already existing networks or organizations. These groups, usually associated with an organization or citizen's group, become "affiliates" of the Network.
- ***Earth Institutes.*** When an organizer decides to offer earth institute programs indefinitely, and it has an organization and plan in place for that purpose, it may join the network of other partner organizations offering Earth Institute programs. Each member will be an autonomous nonprofit organization or project of such an organization that offers earth institute programs in a defined region. Volunteer led organizations can also be Sister Earth Institutes if led by a steering committee and highly motivated volunteers. The size of the regions of responsibility will vary. But each member will have a strategy to offer programs broadly within its region.



Background and Vision, Continued

NWEI Mission, Program Development, and Outreach Strategy.

The Northwest Earth Institute designs all its programs to facilitate profound change in individuals and organizations. At the individual level, the programs facilitate change in values, attitudes, habits, and actions that allow one (1) to resist the consumer culture and reduce personal impact on the earth, (2) to become a more assertive protector of the earth by making demands on others, and (3) to become an agent of change, alone or with a group, within a circle of influence selected by the person or the group. This circle might include friends or colleagues in a workplace, center of faith, school, or neighborhood, or citizens of a local community or larger region. At the organizational level, the programs encourage management or groups of employees to adopt more sustainable business practices in the broadest sense.

Program development. Since profound and enduring change is the goal, each NWEI program is focused on one or more of the following aspects of the change process: ***awareness*** - insight or information; ***consciousness*** – incorporating a new way of seeing oneself, nature, and human society; ***motivation or inspiration*** - a requisite for change; ***intent*** - decision to make a change; ***action*** - change of a personal habit, or an outward action.

Outreach strategy. NWEI takes programs to groups of people where they spend their time: workplace, home, center of faith, school, neighborhood (new focus), and small town. Where possible, NWEI offers programs with trained volunteers.

The Great Turning. Author and activist Joanna Macy refers to the “Great Turning” as a metaphor for the goal of achieving a sustainable future for humans and other forms of life. She identifies three areas of work for those who are concerned for the earth: holding actions, structural change, and paradigmatic change. The earth institute process is focused on the third area, although the process is often a catalyst for work in the other two.



Benefits of Partnership & Resources Available

Revenue Sharing. NWEI wishes to support the work of other non-profits and volunteer efforts engaged in creating a more sustainable future. Sister Earth Institutes always receive a discounted discussion guide price of \$15.50 (as opposed to the standard \$18 price). Other partners and affiliates receive a bulk discount rate of \$15.50 for orders of 30 or more discussion guides. NWEI encourages partner organizations to offer NWEI programs at a cost that allows you to cover your own expenses as well as to support and enhance your sustainability education efforts. Most partners offer the discussion course programs for \$20, thus making at \$4.50 margin on each participant.

** NWEI asks that you not charge more than \$25 for participation in NWEI programs.* NWEI's objective in this guideline is to continue offering the discussion course programs at a cost that is not prohibitive to participation.

Membership Building & Community Engagement. Offering NWEI programs in your community can be a tool for accessing potential members and community stakeholders. The course offerings are a high-quality educational program offering for those organizations looking to enhance sustainability education programming.

NWEI Training Manuals. NWEI has developed a series of training manuals to assist those engaged in earth institute work. These individual manuals are available at www.nwei.org in the Course Resources section of the website, or upon request.

- *Outreach Manual* (how to recruit organizers to form discussion groups)
- *Introductory Presenters' Manual*
- *Mentors' Manual*
- *Manual for Training Presenters and Mentors*
- *Manual on Building a Volunteer Team* (organizing volunteers to support ongoing earth institute work in a community)

Training. NWEI staff and volunteers provide training for those involved in the Network, in Portland and around the country, including a North American Network training every two years and regional trainings organized with local colleagues, as needed.

Bi-Monthly Conference Calls & Listserv. An optional bi-monthly conference call is scheduled for sister earth institutes to share best practices and connect with others in the network. A listserv connects the sister organizations and is a tool for sharing ideas and information.

Outreach Team. The National Outreach Team is available for consultation. You can reach us at 503/227-2807 or contact@nwei.org.



General Guidelines for NWEI's Partners

Mission. Partner organizations will have a mission consistent with the following:

Inspiring people to accept responsibility for Earth.

Common programs. Partners will use NWEI discussion courses as a primary outreach and program offering tool.

Use of volunteers. Partners will consider recruiting and training volunteers to offer programs to retain the grassroots nature of the outreach.

Shared values. The work of the Earth Institute Network is founded on the following shared values:

- *An ecocentric world view - humans have a responsibility to allow other species to flourish.*
- *A recognition that individually we should take from the earth only for vital needs, reflected in the practice of simplicity by living in a less consumptive and more mindful way.*
- *The duty to act to change the direction of society in a fundamental way so it will become sustainable.*

Guiding Principles. In offering programs to the public, each member will operate in a manner consistent with the following:

- *Conduct Broad Outreach. Be inclusive and non-judgmental in an outreach to the public.*
- *Be a resource, not a teacher or preacher. In the outreach with discussion courses, act as a resource for those who wish to participate, not as a "teacher" or one telling others how they should change. The program format assumes that profound personal change is most likely to occur when individuals confront their values, attitudes, and habits in a supportive group of peers.*
- *Recognize that people are empowered to protect the earth when (1) they acknowledge their natural love and concern for the earth and (2) they are affirmed by a supportive group of peers.*
- *Consensus not a goal. The process works whether or not the participants agree. Consensus is not a goal.*



General Criteria for Becoming a Sister Earth Institute

When an individual or organization wishes to offer Earth Institute programs over the long term, many have chosen to become a “sister” earth institute in the Earth Institute Network. This is the most formalized relationship with NWEI. *General guidelines include:*

Common name. Each sister will use the name “Earth Institute,” when possible. This will highlight a common sense of purpose within the Network and to others. The Earth Institute name can also be a project name of a fiscal agent organization or a sponsoring organization.

Common programs. Each sister will use NWEI discussion courses as a primary outreach tool, using programs developed by NWEI, as modified to fit local needs.

Mission. Each sister will have a mission consistent with the following:
Inspiring people to take responsibility for Earth.

Organization. There are several possible structures for Sister Earth Institutes. These include:

- *Becoming an autonomous nonprofit organization*
- *Being volunteer led and operated with an organized and mobilized Steering Committee in place.*
- *Choosing a fiscal agent and thus being a project of another non-profit organization. If the Earth Institute is a project of a parent organization, the following criteria are recommended:*
 - *It has a separate steering committee responsible for the project.*
 - *It has a separate identity as evidenced in letterhead, printed materials, newsletter, etc.*
 - *It has a mission consistent with that stated above.*

Plan. Each Sister Earth Institute will submit an operating plan which includes:

- *A description of the organizational structure*
- *A general listing of prior earth institute courses*
- *A defined geographic area for the program outreach (city, region, etc).*
- *Planned activities for the coming year*
- *A proposed budget for the earth institute*
- *A commitment to recruit and train volunteers to offer programs to retain the grassroots nature of the outreach*
- *A commitment to send a representative to the bi-annual National Earth Institute Training, when possible*
- *An agreement to operate by the attached “Guidelines For National Earth Institute Network.”*

Institutional involvement in political issues. Sister Earth Institutes may not take positions on specific political issues.

In order to formalize the partnership, completed plans can be sent to the Northwest Earth Institute, Outreach Team, 317 SW Alder, Suite 1050, Portland, OR 97215. Thank you!