INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS OF NATURE TRIBUNAL

November 7th & 8th 2017 (8h-19h)
LVR-Landesmuseum, Bonn, Germany
GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR THE RIGHTS OF NATURE (GARN)

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature is a network of organizations and individuals committed to the universal adoption and implementation of legal systems that recognize, respect and enforce “Rights of Nature.”

Founded in Ecuador in September 2010, GARN serves as a global hub for connecting and fostering relationships, exchange of knowledge, and collaboration to forward the understanding and implementation of Rights of Nature. GARN members are a diverse network of scientists, attorneys, economists, indigenous leaders, authors, spiritual leaders, politicians, actors, business leaders, homemakers, students and activists in over 100 countries, from six continents of North and South America, Africa, Europe, Asia and Australia, who are looking to transform our human relationship with our planet. They offer a network of experienced, supportive allies for communities, governments and others who are advancing earth rights based thinking, community actions, and legal systems.

GARN's mission is to encourage the recognition and effective implementation of Rights of Nature, focused on creating a system of jurisprudence that sees and treats nature as a fundamental, rights-bearing entity – not as mere property to be exploited. GARN seeks to break out of the human-centered limitations of our current legal systems by recognizing, respecting and enforcing Rights of Nature as one of the most transformative that humanity can take to create a thriving future for all.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

6 WORLD REGION REPRESENTATIVES
Cormac Cullinan Wild Law, Africa
Osprey Orielle Lake Women’s Earth and Climate Action Network WECAN, North America
Natalia Greene CEDENMA, South America
Valerie Cabanes End Ecocide Europe, Europe
Vandana Shiva Navdanya, Asia
Michelle Maloney Australian Earth Laws Alliance, Australia/Oceania

5 EARTH RIGHTS EXPERTS
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Maude Barlow Council of Canadians
Shannon Biggs Movement Rights
Michelle Bender/Darlene May Lee Earth Law Center
Fiona Wilton Gaia Foundation

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Alicia Jimenez Earth Charter, Costa Rica
Patricia Siemen. CEJ – USA
Lisa Mead. Earth Law Alliance, UK
Esperanza Martinez. Acción Ecológica, Ecuador
Atossa Soltani, Amazon Watch/ Christensen Fund, USA
Tom Brennan, Gaia Foundation, USA
Samanta Novella. NatureRights, France
Jacqueline Balvet, Attac, France

FOUNDING MEMBERS

LATIN AMERICA
Fundación Pachamama, Ecuador www.pachamama.org.ec
Centro para el Desarrollo del Indígena Amazónico (CEDIA) www.cedia.org.pe
Shinai www.shinai.org.pe
Fundación Herencia www.herencia.org.bo
Comité Permanente de la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos www.cdh.org.ec
Frente de Defensa de la Amazonía www.texacotoxico.org
Comité de Solidaridad con Bolivia

NORTH AMERICA
Ecolex, Corporación de Gestión y Derecho Ambiental www.ecolex-ec.org
Fundación Ambiente y Sociedad www.ambientysociedad.org

EUROPE
The Gaia Foundation www.gaiafoundation.org
WildLaw UK www.wildlawuk.org

ASIA
Navdanya International www.Navdanya.org

AUSTRALIA

AFRICA
EnAct International www.enact-international.com

AFRICA
EnAct International www.enact-international.com

EUROPE
The Gaia Foundation www.gaiafoundation.org
WildLaw UK www.wildlawuk.org

ASIA
Navdanya International www.Navdanya.org
Expansion Members

Ecobirth – Women for Earth and Birth www. ecobirthwomenforearthandbirth.org
Ecologie Organics www.ecologieorganics.com.au
ECOTERRA www.ecoterra-international.org
Ecovillage Huehueltcocoyt, Teapotlán Morelos http://www.huehueltcocoyt.net
Edible Planet www.EdiblePlanet.org
Ejaguwod-Ghana
Empowerment works www. EmpowermentWorks.org
End Eccoli on Earth http://www. endecciode.org/
Environmental Education Fund http://environmentaleducationfund.org/
The Enviro Show www.enviroshow.org
Flutewalker Musical Arts www.flutewalker.com
Food and Trees for Africa www.tees.co.za
Foundation for a Sustainable Future www. sustainable-future.org
FourYearsGo. Go www.fouryearsago.org/
Fundacion Solon. advisor, Bolivia
La fundacion PACMA www. fundacionpacmana.com
Gaia University www.gaiainiversity.org
Gaia Foundation, UK
Gaia Spirit Foundation www. gaiaspiritfoundation.org
Global Advocates for Justice (Kenya) fssg. blogspot.com
Grà Nàdur – Nature’s Love granadur.net/
Growing Air Foundation www. growingairfoundation.org
Hapicuitur http://hapicuitur.be/
Human Dimensions TV http://www. humanndtv.com
Humanity's Calling
Indigenous Environmental Network http://www. ienearth.org/
Institute of Wellbeing wbbd.org
Inter_Culture www.inter-culture.org
International Funders for Indigenous Peoples http://www.internationalfunders. org/
International Public Policy Institute (IPPI) http://www.ippiun.org
Iracambri en iracambri.com
Keep Nature Green www.keepnaturegreen.com
Lemkin House http://lemkinhouse.org
Long Branch Environmental Education Center http://www.longbranchec.org/
home/
Marian County Community Rights http://marioncommunityrights.wordpress.com/
Mercy Global Action www.mercyworld.org
Ministry of Animals http://ministryofanimals.wordpress.com/
Movement Rights – USA
Native Women’s Association of Canada www.nwac.ca
Nature’s Friends www.naturesfriends.coop
OpEPA http://www.opepa.org/
Oshen 2 Oshen
Our Eco Future www.ourecofuture.com.au
Our Mother Earth Constitution http://theearthconstitution.org
P3 Permaculture http://www.p3permaculture.ca/
Pachamama Romania http://www. pachamamaramoncia.ro/
Pan African Climate Justice Alliance www. pacja.org
Painted Monkey – DOWS Radio
Polidoc Productions www.polidoc.com
Project 90 by 2030 www.90x2030.org.za
Prayac Cosmos – Accra Ghana
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Red Bear Healing Home Society www. redbearhealinghome.ca
Resistance – Holistic Health Studio http://www. resistense.com
Rights of Mother Earth Signature Campaign www.RightsOfMotherEarth.com
Sign our petition for the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth
Save the Earth Consulting www.savetheearthconsulting.com
Share the World’s Resources www.stw.org
SKY Memorial Foundation http://www. skymemorialfoundation.com/
SLO Clean Water Action http://www. slocleanwateraction.org/
Solidaridad Internacional www.sol-inter.org
South Gate News www.south-gate-news.com/
Spreading Planetary Awareness www.facebook.com/spreadingplanetaryawareness
Surya Namaskar for World Peace www.suryanamaskarforworldpeace.org
SouthWest Pride, Inc. http://swpride.org/
Sublimee www.sublimee.net/
Sustainable Summer sustainabilitysummer.org
Tara Foundation www.TaraFoundation.org
The Bridge www.thebridgetampa.com
Transition Express www.TransitionExpress. vpsweb.com
UGanda Coalition www.ugandacoalition.org
Unified Field Applied World http://www. unifieldworld.org/
Vital Systems www.vitalsystemscsa.com
Voces de Tierra – Evolve to Ecology http://www.vocesdetierra.com
Well Worn Theatre Company www.wellworn.org.za
Whale of A Time www.whaleofatime.org
Wisconsin Wildlife Ethic-Vote Our Wildlife (Wisconsin WE VOW) www.wildlifeethic.org
Wiser Earth www.wiserearth.org/group/
Tech Skeptics United
Women’s Earth and Climate Caucus www. iwecc.org
W.O.P.A Green Project http://wpagneproject.kbo.co.kr/
WonderWorks Consulting www. WonderWorksLeadership.com
World Consciousness Pact worldconsciouspact.org
Yoga & Sante www.yogasante.net/
Youth Ecology Club – Serbia
Zero Waste Kauai www.zerowastekauai.org
The Ziral Concentration of North America www.ziral.org
Rights for Nature

More Information

Rights of Nature in the World

The rights of nature are based upon the “Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth” (UDRME) which recognizes the rights of ecosystems to exist and the duty of humanity to respect the integrity of their life cycles. UDRME emerged from the “World Peoples’ Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth,” hosted at Cochabamba, Bolivia in 2010 and attended by over 35,000 participants from more than 100 countries.

Under current law, nature is treated as private property to be destroyed for profit. It is a legal framework that is proving deadly to people and the planet, making it essential to transform our international and domestic legal systems toward a jurisprudence that recognizes rights of nature. The shift to this new legal framework is already underway. The People’s World Conference in Cochabamba called for the building of a “Global People’s Movement for Mother Earth,” which inspired the formation of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN) in September 2010. GARN enables hundreds of organizations throughout the world who share the worldview reflected in the Earth Rights Declaration to collaborate.

The Universal Declaration for the Rights of Mother Earth (UDRME) considers Nature as a subject rather than an object or commodity. It recognizes an intrinsic value to nature and all its life forms, for which it enunciates the right to exist, maintain and regenerate their vital cycles. As acknowledged by the UDRME, rather than arising from human sources, nature’s rights are inherent to its very existence: Ecosystems are therefore considered as subjects of rights, which can be represented in a court of law.

From a philosophical standpoint, Rights of Nature represents a call to replace the current paradigm of growth with one of harmony with nature. Currently, our legal, social and economic systems are premised on an assumption of unlimited growth for profit and an insatiable desire for greater consumption. Nature is treated as a mere resource to be consumed and depleted. By passing laws and regulations that “manage” or “regulate” our exploitation of nature, we merely legalize its destruction. The result has been unprecedented damage to our planet to the peril of both humans and nature.

Recognizing Rights to Nature challenges our destructive legal and economic systems and puts forth a bold vision of living in harmony with all life, reconciling human and nature, and restoring natural balance with our planet.

Grounded in the wisdom of ancient and indigenous cultures, Rights of Nature seeks to maintain a balanced relationship between humankind and every form of life, in recognizing and respecting the biosphere balance. The Rights of Nature are also intrinsically linked to the need for real participatory democracy, where communities and guardians of nature’s rights have equal standing to decide upon issues that affect all of our well-being (including harmful projects such as mega-dams, mining projects, and fossil fuel extraction), decisions which today are exclusively made by the market and its financial or political elites.

Rights of Nature are part of a large growing movement that recognizes our interdependence with the terrestrial community and the right for all members to exist and prosper.

1 For example, Ecuador and Bolivia recognize rights of nature in their constitutions and more than two dozen municipalities in the United States have adopted rights of nature ordinances, including the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CONCEPT “RIGHTS OF MOTHER EARTH”

Over the last decade, the Rights of Nature has expanded rapidly across the globe.

The petition for Rights of Nature has obtained, at this date, more than 825,000 signatures from 122 countries. The “Universal Declaration of Right of Nature”, official founding statute of Rights of Nature, was applauded by 35,000 people during the Cochabamba conference in 2012.

While the concept of nature’s rights has existed in indigenous wisdom for millennia, the first step towards recognizing the Rights of Nature in law began at the regional level in 2006. Since then, the legislators of Ecuador and Bolivia have adopted it, and it is part of numerous regional and municipal initiatives in several other countries, as for example, included in more than 180 municipal ordinances in the United States. (History: http://therightsofnature.org/ga-ron-video/)

KEY DATES

2006 - TAMAQUA BOROUGH, PENNSYLVANIA, first municipality in the United States to recognize natural communities and ecosystems as “persons” in a court of law, for purposes of protecting the community from toxic waste, also recognizing residents’ rights to a healthy environment.

2008 - ECUADOR BECOMES THE FIRST COUNTRY TO INCLUDING RIGHTS OF NATURE IN ITS CONSTITUTION. For the first time in history, the constitution of a country recognizes and calls for enforcement of the Rights of Nature (Art 71 and 57). Far from reducing it to a set of exploitable resources, it says: “Nature or Pachamama, where life is or realizes and reproduces itself, has the right of respect of his existence, as well as to maintain and regeneration of its vital cycles, structures, functions and evolutionary processes.”

04/2010 - BOLIVIA HOSTS THE “WORLD PEOPLE’S CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE RIGHTS OF MOTHER EARTH” Cochabamba Agreement upon the “Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth” (UDRME). EARTH DAY: 35,000 PEOPLE GATHERED TO ACCLAIM THE UDRME.

09/2010 - CREATION OF GARN, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature

10/2012 - BOLIVIA ADOPTS FRAMEWORK LAW on Mother Earth and Integral Development for Living Well.

12/2012 - BOLIVIA AND ECUADOR ADOPTS LAW ON THE RIGHTS OF MOTHER EARTH.

12/2012 - RIO+20 - UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT -Rights of Nature is articulated in the UN consensus document and recognized in the People’s Summit Declaration

120,000 SIGNATURES ARE PRESENTED TO THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/yes-to-rights-of-nature/

01/2014 FIRST INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS OF NATURE TRIBUNAL at “Global Rights of Nature Summit” Quito, Ecuador www.therightsofnature.org/rights-of-nature-tribunal/

04/2014 - HEARING FOR YASUNÍ in Regional Chamber of the Tribunal in Quito, Ecuador

07/2014 - TE UREWERA, NEW ZEALAND. A national park became “a legal entity” with “all the rights, powers, duties, and liabilities of a legal person”. Te Urewera is managed by the new Te Urewera Board responsible “to act on behalf of, and in the name of, Te Urewera”.

08/2014 - HEARING FOR YASUNÍ in Regional Chamber of the Tribunal in Quito, Ecuador http://therightsofnature.org/rights-of-nature-tribunal-quito/

10/2014 - HEARING AGAINST CHEVRON in Regional Chamber of the Tribunal in San Francisco, United States

10/2014 - HEARING ON THE GREAT BARRIER REEF on Regional Chamber of the Tribunal in Brisbane, Australia


04/2016 - HEARING FOR THE DELTA ECOSYSTEM in Regional Chamber of the Tribunal in San Francisco, United States

10/2016 - TWO RESOLUTIONS ADDRESSING RIGHTS OF NATURE WERE ADOPTED AT THE IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii. Resolution on Crimes against the Environment (Res. 078) and resolution on Humanity’s right to a healthy environment (Res.089)

01/2017 - NEW CONSTITUTION OF MEXICO CITY ADOPTS RIGHTS OF NATURE (article 13, paragraphs 2 and 3, page 23) that will enter into force in September 2018.

03/2017 - GANGA AND YAMUNA RIVERS, TWO OF INDIA’S MOST SACRED RIVERS, WERE GRANTED HUMAN STATUS.

04/2017 - THE HIMALAYAN GANGOTRI AND YAMUNOTRI GLACIERS WERE GRANTED STATUS OF LIVING ENTITIES including waterfalls, meadows, lakes and forests.

04/2017 - SEVENTH INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON HARMONY WITH NATURE to commemorate International Mother Earth Day addressing Earth jurisprudence and the Sustainable Development agenda.
The UN Climate Change Conference - will take place on November 6-17, 2017 in Bonn, Germany and will be presided over by the Government of Fiji. This is a particularly important date as the World’s Nations are aiming to make important decisions towards the effective implementation of the Paris Accord that aims to keep global warming below 2° C, an agreement that once ratified, would replace the Kyoto protocol and would be enforceable for all signatory countries. This agreement represents a major turning point in our world history, if indeed, it is ambitious, binding and federative enough to stop the irreversible processes of environmental degradation linked to global warming.

The climate issue raises unprecedented questions. While the most vulnerable populations around the world are being exposed to disasters due to rising temperatures, there is therefore an increasingly urgent need to challenge our value systems and our governance models, raising critical issues of environmental justice and the potential need for an international legislative framework to prevent and mitigate the consequences of global warming. Indeed, the current international legal framework does not have the tools to supervise dangerous industrial activities, protect ecosystems or human health. This topic is part of substantive discussions that affect the development of international environmental law, but also economic, international security, and biodiversity issues.

The entire global community will then be reunited and will listen attentively to environmental issues. COP23 is a unique opportunity, a crucial moment to argue for the initiatives from civil society on the new political, economic, social and ecological world challenges that humanity is now facing.

The “Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature” (GARN) will hold the International Rights of Nature Tribunal in Bonn, at the LVR Landesmuseum on the 7th and 8th of November 2017. The Tribunal proposes and testes new legal concepts, the recognition of the Rights of Nature under the public law at the international and local level - based on the “Universal Declaration of the Rights of Nature” - which recognizes the rights of ecosystems to exist and the duty of humanity to respect the integrity of their life cycles.

This approach presents a systemic solution to climate change. Based on Earth Laws, this new socio-ecosystemic perspective acknowledges that humans are inalienably part of Nature and their actions have consequences, not only over their environment, but also for their own well-being. In highlighting the consubstantial interdependence between human beings and nature, they are part of a broader fundamental debate that touches humanity’s space within nature, in order to nurture collective consciousness, transformation and global governance models.
In 2017 Europe is particularly ripe for Rights of Nature. On the one hand, international developments such as those in India and New Zealand have been very well reported in European media, and has generated interest beyond environmental circles. This media excitement has also raised the attention of some of the growing European efforts to have Rights of Nature recognized in law and policy – including local initiatives such as the rights of nature by-law in Frome, UK - and the initiative to have an EU Directive on Rights of Nature. These local and regional legal movements join with political changes that are starting to recognize and incorporate Rights of Nature. For example, last year the UK (England & Wales) Green Party adopted rights of nature as a binding policy.

Legal and policy initiatives and developments are supported by a groundswell of events, conferences and academic research. Already in 2017 there have been two significant conferences. One, the Earth Rights Conference in Sweden, brought together a range of activists, academics and environmentalists and produced a declaration which not only drew on European sources, but also brought in the UN’s Harmony with Nature initiative. Another conference in Brussels was aimed particularly at Rights of Nature at the EU level, and brought-in MEPs as well as academics and a talk from IUCN’s Luc Bas. This conference was largely in support of the above-mentioned EU Directive initiative. Later this year, a large conference on Rights of Nature and ‘Biocracy’ will take place in Germany.

Taken together, this shows that there is now an unprecedented level of interest in, and support for, Rights of Nature in Europe. Old initiatives and movements are receiving a surge of support and new ones are arising all the time. 2017 is a particularly opportune moment for Rights of Nature to rise up strongly across Europe and any other initiatives will surely reap the benefit of this catalytic year.

**RON’S TRIBUNALS BACKGROUND**

The GARN launched the “International Rights of Nature Tribunal” in 2014. The First session of the tribunal convened hearings in Quito, Ecuador / January 2014 on the Global Rights of Nature Summit. The tribunal was presided by Dr. Vandana Shiva, internationally renowned author, physicist and environmental activist. The Second International Rights of Nature Tribunal, was in Lima, Peru / December 2014 during UNFCCC-COP20, presided by Alberto Acosta, economist and former president of the Constituent Assembly from Ecuador. The third International Rights of Nature Tribunal was held on December 2015 during 21st Convention of the Parties of the UNFCCC in Paris, France. The tribunal was presided over by Cormac Cullinan, Wild law author, and hosted by GARN in partnership with NatureRights, End Ecocide on Earth & Attac.