INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS OF NATURE TRIBUNAL

November 7th & 8th 2017 (8h-19h)
LVR-Landesmuseum, Bonn, Germany
A unique, citizen-created initiative to testify publicly about the destruction of the Earth and propose a systemic alternative to environmental protection and current environmental laws.

The Tribunal is a unique, citizen-created initiative. It gives people from all around the world the opportunity to testify publicly as to the destruction of the Earth, destruction that governments and corporations not only allow, but in some cases encourage.

The Tribunal provides a systemic alternative to environmental protection, acknowledging that ecosystems have the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate their vital cycles, with legal standing in a court of law. The Tribunal has a strong focus on enabling Indigenous Peoples to share their unique concerns and solutions about land, water, air and culture with the global community.

The Tribunal features internationally renowned lawyers and leaders for planetary justice, who will hear emblematic cases addressing issues such as climate change and false solutions, fracking, extractive industries such as mining, and other violations of nature’s rights.

The Tribunals formulate judgments and recommendations for the Earth’s protection and restoration based on the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth and existing nature’s rights laws. Among other things, the Declaration binds us to respect the integrity of the vital ecological processes of the Earth.

The International Tribunal of the Rights of Nature is part of an effort to promote a change of consciousness and highlight the need to expand the international legal framework, national laws and courts to ensure the safety of the planet by preserving biodiversity and respecting ecosystem dynamics.

The fourth International Rights of Nature Tribunal will be held on the 7th, 8th November in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 23) in Bonn, Germany at the LVR-Landesmuseum. This tribunal is hosted by the Global Alliance of the Rights of Nature.

Registration details: http://therightsofnature.org

November 7th & 8th 2017 (8h-19h) LVR-Landesmuseum, Colmantstr. 14-16, 53115 Bonn, Germany

Contact : Natalia Greene (GARN Secretariat) - nati.greene@gmail.com - +593 99 944 3724
The Tribunal is hosted by the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN), who holds the Secretariat and formal procedures for ongoing International Rights of Nature Tribunals. Presenters, experts, witnesses and affected people present each of the cases.

**PRESIDENT**  Tom Goldtooth (Indigenous Environmental Network; Dine’ Dakota, Turtle Island-United States)

**JUDGES**
- Cormac Cullinan (Wild Law Institute, South Africa)
- Osprey Orielle Lake (WECAN, United States)
- Alberto Acosta (Former Constitutional Assembly President, Ecuador)
- Simona Fraudatario (Permanent People’s Tribunal, Italy)
- Shanna Riggs (Movement Rights, United States)
- Fernando «Pino» Solanas (Argentinian Senator, Argentina)
- Ute Koczy (Urgewald E.V., former German Parliamentarian, Germany)
- Ruth Nyambura (African Ecofeminists Collective, Kenya)

**PROSECUTORS FOR THE EARTH**
- Ramiro Ávila (Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Ecuador)
- Linda Sheehan (Planet Pledge, USA)

**SECRETARIAT**  Natalia Greene (Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, Ecuador)

**DAY 1 NOVEMBER 7TH**

**8H15**  WELCOMING
welcoming from Bonn Authorities
welcoming from Tribunal’s Secretariat

**8H35**  OPENING INDIGENOUS CEREMONY
Ása Simma (Sámi People), Tom Goldtooth (Dine’ Dakota), Mirian Cisneros (Sarayaku), Yaku Viteri (Sarayaku)

**9H00**  INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS OF NATURE TRIBUNAL
What is the Tribunal?  Osprey Orielle Lake (WECAN, United States)
Rights of Nature RON Assessment  Esperanza Martínez (Acción Ecológica, Ecuador)
Opening from Tribunal’s President  Tom Goldtooth (IEN, Dine’ Dakota, United States)
Opening from Prosecutors of the Earth  Ramiro Ávila (Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Ecuador)
Linda Sheehan (Planet Pledge, USA)

**9H35**  1. CLIMATE CHANGE CASE - FALSE ENERGY SOLUTIONS
FRACTING, NUCLEAR AND CONSOLIDATION OF FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY IN NORTH AMERICA
Osprey Orielle Lake (Judge); Ramiro Ávila (Prosecutor)
Presenter  Tadzio Mueller (Rosa Luxembourg Foundation, Germany)
Experts  Enrique Viale (Asociación Argentina de Abogados Ambientalistas, Argentina)
Ben Beachy (Sierra Club, United States)
Rheinhard Uhrig (Global 2000, Austria)
Impacted people  Kashmira Banee (CARES), Bryan Parras (TEJAS)

**11H00**  2. FINANCIALIZATION OF NATURE AND REDD+
Ruth Nyambura (Judge); Linda Sheehan (Prosecutor)
Presenter  Jutta Kill (Freelance researcher, Germany)
Experts  Melissa Moreano (Critical Geography Collective, Ecuador)
Impacted people  Ken Henshaw (Social Action, Nigeria)

**12H00**  3. LIGNITE MINING - HAMBACH FOREST, GERMANY
Ute Koczy (Judge); Ramiro Ávila (Prosecutor)
Presenter  Emilio Alfred Weinberg (Ende Gelände Movement, Germany)
Experts  Eva Töller (Naturfuehrungen Hambacher Forst, Germany)
Impacted people  Luna (Hambach Forest, Germany)

**13H00**  LUNCH BREAK

**14H30**  4. DEFENDERS OF MOTHER EARTH
Simona Fraudatario (Judge); Linda Sheehan (Prosecutor)

**INDIGENOUS VIOLATIONS STANDING ROCK -USA**
Presenter  Dallas Goldtooth (Indigenous Environmental Network, United States)
Expert / Impacted  Kandi Mossett (Indigenous Environmental Network, United States)
INDIGENOUS VIOLATIONS RUSSIA
Presenter  Vladislav Tannagashev (Revival of Kazas and the Shor people, Russia)
Expert / Impacted  Yana Tannagasheva (Revival of Kazas and the Shor people, Russia)

INDIGENOUS SAMI PEOPLE
Presenter  Stefán Mikaelsson (Sámi People, Northern Europe)
Expert / Impacted  Åsa Simma (Sámi People, Northern Europe)

16H00 5. WATER DEPRIVATION IN ALMERÍA - SPAIN
Cormac Cullinan (Judge); Ramiro Ávila (Prosecutor)
Presenter  David Dene (International Activist, EcoVillage Almería, Spain)
Experts  Ion Holban (Ecocide El Rio de Aguas, Almería, Spain)
Impacted people  Sheila Andion García (Plataforma de Defensa El Rio de Aguas, Almería, Spain)

17H00 PROSECUTORS FROM THE EARTH STATEMENTS
17H30 JUDGES STATEMENTS FROM DAY 1
18H30 CLOSURE DAY TRIBUNAL’S PRESIDENT

DAY 2 NOVEMBER 8TH

8H30 WELCOMING AND OPENINGS
Welcoming  Natalia Greene (GARN) and Osprey Orielle Lake (WECAN)
Opening from Tribunal’s President  Tom Goldtooth (IEN)
Opening from Prosecutors of the Earth  Ramiro Ávila (U. Simón Bolívar) and Linda Sheehan (Planet Pledge)

9H00 6. AMAZON THREATS CASES
Alberto Acosta (Judge), Fernando «Pino» Solanas (Judge), Ramiro Ávila (Prosecutor)

ECUADOR’S AMAZON AND SARAYAKU
Presenter  Esperanza Martínez (Acción Ecológica, Ecuador)
Experts  Mirian Cisneros (Sarayaku, Ecuador)
Impacted people  Yaku Viteri (Sarayaku, Ecuador)

BRASIL’S AMAZON
Presenter  Sônia Guajajara (APIB, Terra Indígena Araribóia, Brazil)
Experts  Ninawa Yawanawa (Yawanawa people, Brazil)

TIPNIS IN BOLIVIA
Presenter  Martín Vilela (Climate Justice Activist, Bolivia)
Experts  Fabian Gil Rocha (Tipnis, Bolivia)
Impacted people  Marqueza Teco Moyoviri de Maleca (Tipnis, Bolivia)

MONTAGNE D’OR - FRENCH GUYANA
Presenter  Marine Calmet (France libertés Consultant, France)
Experts  Patrick Monnier (Association Maouri Nature, French Guyana)
Impacted people  Christophe Pierre (Jeunesse Autochtone de Guyane, French Guyana)

11H30 7. TRADE AGREEMENTS IMPLICATIONS ON NATURE
Shannon Biggs (Judge), Linda Sheehan (Prosecutor)
Presenter  Maude Barlow (Council of Canadians, Canada)
Experts  Joerg Hass (Boell Foundation, Germany)
Impacted people  Ndívile Mokoena (GenderCC Women for Climate Justice, South Africa); Makoma Lekalakala (EarthLife Africa, South Africa); Alberto Saldañando (Indigenous Environmental Network, United States)

12H30 PROSECUTORS FROM THE EARTH FINAL STATEMENTS
13H00 JUDGES STATEMENTS FROM DAY 2
13H20 PRESIDENT’S FINAL SENTENCE AND TRIBUNAL RECOMMENDATIONS
13H35 SECRETARIAT’S TRIBUNAL CLOSURE DAY 2
GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR THE RIGHTS OF NATURE (GARN)

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN) is a network of organizations and individuals committed to the universal adoption and implementation of legal systems that recognize, respect and enforce the rights of nature. The rights of nature are based upon the “Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth” (UDRME), which 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.

THE NATURE AS A SUBJECT OF RIGHTS

The UDRME considers nature as a subject rather than an object or commodity. It recognizes an intrinsic value to the 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. Rights of nature is part of a large growing movement that recognizes our interdependence with nature and the right of all Earth Community members to exist and prosper.

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 (For example, included in more than 180 municipal ordinances in the United States).

2006          TAMACA BOROUGH, PENNSYLVANIA, FIRST MUNICIPALITY IN THE U.S.
             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, 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 “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.


12/2010        BOLIVIA AND ECUADOR ADOPTS LAW ON THE RIGHTS OF MOTHER EARTH.

10/2012        BOLIVIA ADOPTS FRAMEWORK LAW ON MOTHER EARTH AND INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LIVING WELL.

12/2012        UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, “RIO +20”
             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.

01/2014        FIRST INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS OF NATURE TRIBUNAL
             Quito, Ecuador - “Global Rights of Nature Summit”

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”. 
GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR THE RIGHTS OF NATURE

Recognizing the unparalleled developments in recognition of the rights of nature worldwide, global leaders and rights of nature advocates from six continents came together in September 2010 to further galvanize the emerging movement and create the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature.

GARN serves as a global hub for connecting and fostering relationships, exchange of knowledge, and collaborating to forward the understanding and implementation of Rights of Nature. GARN members are a diverse network of experts (scientists, attorneys, economists, indigenous leaders, authors, spiritual leaders, politicians, actors, business leaders, homemakers, students and activists) to advance earth rights based thinking, community actions, and legal systems. GARN is 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.

SOME MEMBERS OF GARN

Alberto Acosta (FLACSO, Ecuador)  Atossa Soltani (Amazon Watch)  Carine Nadal (Gaia Foundation)  Cormac Cullinan (Wild Law, Africa)  Fiona Wilton (Gaia Foundation)  Linda Sheehan (Planet Pledge)  Lisa Mead (Earth Law Alliance)  Maude Barlow (Council of Canadians)  Michelle Maloney (Australian Earth Laws Alliance)  Natalia Greene (Secretariat)  Osprey Orielle Lake (Women’s Earth Climate Action Network)  Pablo Solon (Focus on the Global South)  Pat Siemen (Center for Earth Jurisprudence)  Shannon Biggs (Movement Rights)  Tom BK Goldtooth (Indigenous Environmental Network)  Valerie Cabanes (End Ecocide Europe)  Vandana Shiva (Navdanya)

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.
4TH INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS OF NATURE TRIBUNAL

EARTH PROSECUTORs

Linda Sheehan

Linda Sheehan is Executive Director of Planet Pledge, a project of the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, where she advances global investment and philanthropic solutions to climate change. Prior to Planet Pledge, she was Executive Director of Earth Law Center, where she advocated for nature’s rights. Ms. Sheehan also ran the California Coastkeeper Alliance and Pacific Region office of Ocean Conservancy. Ms. Sheehan was recognized as a California Coastal Hero by Sunset Magazine and the California Coastal Commission. Ms. Sheehan holds a B.S. in chemical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an M.P.P. from U.C. Berkeley’s Goldman School of Public Policy, and a J.D. from U.C. Berkeley Law School.

Ramiro Ávila

Doctor in Juridical Sociology, Universidad del País Vasco. Ecuadorian lawyer, Director of the Law Department at the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar. Professor of Law Philosophy and Constitutional Law at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Quito. Member of the Yasunidos Collective.

SECRETARIAT

Natalia Greene

Natalia Greene - Ecuador, International Rights of Nature Secretariat. Is a consultant for Rights of Nature with Pachamama Alliance and is the focal point in Ecuador for the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature. She graduated in Hampshire College, holds a Political Science master’s degree from FLACSO Ecuador and a master’s degree from UASB on Climate Change. She promoted the recognition of Rights for Nature in Ecuador’s Constitution and has worked on the environmental and indigenous aspects of the Yasuní-ITT Initiative to keep oil underground in the Amazon. From 2011 until 2013, Natalia Greene was the President of CEDENMA, the National Coordinating Entity for Environmental NGO’s, and nowadays she coordinates the Climate Justice National Platform.

TRIBUNAL JUDGES

Tom BK Goldtooth

Tom BK Goldtooth, President of the Tribunal, Dine’/Dakota, United States is the Executive Director of the Indigenous Environmental Network, an international indigenous NGO based in Bemidji, Minnesota near the border of United States/Canada. A social change maker within the Native American community for over 36 years, has become an internationally renowned environmental, Climate and economic justice leader, working with many Indigenous People and social movements around the world. Tom co-produced the award-winning documentary, Drumbeat for Mother Earth, which addresses the effects of bio-accumulative chemicals on indigenous people. Co-founder of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature. Nationality: United States

Shannon Biggs

Shannon Biggs is the co-founder and Executive Director of Movement Rights, advancing legal rights for communities, indigenous peoples and ecosystems. Working in California and with Native American tribes and allies nationally, Shannon assists communities to ban harmful projects by passing binding laws that assert the rights of communities and nature over corporate projects. Internationally she is a recognized leader of the rights of nature/Mother Earth movement, a co-founder of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, and the co-author/editor of two books including “The Rights of Nature, Making the Case for the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Nature.” Though Movement Rights she also leads trainings on community rights and rights of ecosystems throughout the US. Previously she was a senior staffer at Global Exchange and the International Forum on Globalization. She holds a Masters of Science degree from the London School of Economics (LSE) in Economics — Politics of Empire. Nationality: United States

Osprey Orielle Lake

Osprey Orielle Lake is the Founder and Executive Director of the Women’s Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN). She works nationally and internationally with grassroots and Indigenous leaders, policy-makers and scientists to mobilize women for climate justice, resilient communities, systemic change and a just transition to a clean energy future. Osprey serves on the Executive Committee for the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature and is the visionary behind the International Women’s Earth and Climate Summit, which brought together 100 women leaders from around the world. She directs WECAN’s advocacy work in areas such as Women for Forests, Divestment/Investment, Indigenous Rights, Rights of Nature and United Nation Climate Conferences. Osprey is the author of the award-winning book, Uprisings for the Earth: Reconnecting Culture with Nature. www.wecaninternational.org Nationality: United States
**Alberto Acosta**

Alberto Acosta. Ecuadorian economist. Before being appointed Minister of Energy and Mines he was a researcher at the Latin American Institute of Social Research (ILDIS). He was also a researcher and professor at FLACSO-Ecuador. Former president of the Constitutional Assembly that recognized Rights of Nature in Ecuador. Former candidate for the Presidency of the Republic of Ecuador. College professor, lecturer and book author. Nationality: Ecuador

**Cormac Cullinan**

Cormac Cullinan is a director of the Wild Law Institute as well as of Cullinan & Associates Inc. a leading environmental law firm in Cape Town, and of the law and governance consultancy, EnAct International. He has drafted environmental laws, policies and strategies and advised on institutional reforms in more than 20 countries. Cormac’s ground-breaking book Wild Law: A Manifesto for Earth Justice developed the Earth jurisprudence approach and helped inspire the growing global rights of Nature movement. Cormac led the drafting of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, was one of the founders of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature and was in 2008 was include in “Planet Savers: 301 Extraordinary Environmentalists” a book which profiles environmental champions throughout history. Nationality: Irish

**Simona Fraudatario**

Simona Fraudatario, has worked with the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal since 2007 as coordinator of its processes, closely involved with the movements, associations and communities, as well as the international experts convened by the PPT. The Sessions she has coordinated were related to cases of severe violations of human rights caused by States and private actors, committed in Latin America, Asia and Europe. In particular, the cases of Colombia (2006-2008), Mexico (2011-2014), the case of the women working in the garment industry in Asia (2011-2014), and the case of the megaprojects implemented in Italy and Europe (2014-2015). She has also coordinated the recent Session held in Malaysia on Myanmar States crimes committed against Rohingyas and other minority groups and she is currently involved in the Session launched in Barcelona last July on migrants and refugee peoples. Due to her activities and investigations, she participated in international conferences in Latin America and Europe. Nationality: Italian

**Fernando “Pino” Solanas**

Fernando “Pino” Solanas is a cinema director and Argentinian politician, currently National Senator for the City of Buenos Aires, after being elected in the 2013 legislative elections. He presides the Senate’s “Commission on Environment and Sustainable Development” As a Senator he promoted bills such as recognizing Nature as the subject of Rights and the prohibition of mega-mining activity. He has also stimulated debates within the National Congress on the issue of GMOs, fumigation, fracking, climate change, among others. His proposal focuses on the recovery of the natural resources of Argentina, the defense of Nature and the end of the negotiations of large companies of income, capital, mining, oil, etc. to make available to the national state those economic resources, redistributing them, to end poverty and indigence. He has also made a series of films related to natural resources and the defense of Nature. He was a presidential candidate of the Republic Argentina in the elections of 2007. Nationality: Argentinian

**Ute Koczy**

Ute Koczy is the co-Chairperson urgewald e.V. Ute Koczy has long standing experience in international cooperation and development including human rights politics. She works for global social and ecological transformation. As a former parliamentarian on regional and national level she was involved in the fight against the financing/building of the OCP-Pipeline and the support for the Yasuní-Nationalparc without Oil-Exploitation (ITT), Ecuador. Her focus is resources, conflict regions and gender politics. Urgewald is a German environment und human rights organization, whose mission it to adress the underlying causes of global environmental destruction and poverty (www.urgewald.org). Known for its successful coal divestment campaigns on the Norwegian Government Pension Fund urgentewald has created a customizable database for investors and insurers: the „Global Coal Exit List“. Ute Koczy is member of the party Alliance 90/The Greens (Chairperson on the regional level), of the human rights organization Terre des Femmes and locally in the group for the Fairtrade-Town Lemgo (www.ute-koczy.de). Nationality: German

**Ruth Nyambura.**

Ruth Nyambura. Ruth is a political ecologist, researcher and eco-feminist from Kenya whose work focuses on the intersections of gender, economy and ecological justice in Africa. She has previously worked as the advocacy and communications coordinator for the African Biodiversity Network (ABN), a founding member network of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA). Ruth presently works with several national and regional agrarian/ecological justice movements challenging the neo-liberal onslaught that seeks to privatize and commodify the commons (seeds, land, labor, traditional and/ indigenous knowledge) etc. These movements are also actively working on radical alternatives grounded in freedom and justice for all. Ruth is also a member of the No REDD in Africa Network (NRAIN), which brings together climate justice activists from around the continent who reject the financialization of nature and specifically forest related carbon market mechanisms such as REDD/REDD+. The network offers political education related to the climate crises and the radical solutions needed.”
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/Oceana

5 EARTH RIGHTS EXPERTS
Tom Goldtooth  Indigenous Environmental Network - IEN
Maude Barlow  Council of Canadians
Shannon Biggs  Movement Rights
Michelle Bender/Darlene May Lee  Earth Law Center
Fiona Wilton  Gaia Foundation

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Pablo Solón  Fundación Solón, Bolivia
Alberto Acosta  FLACSO, Ecuador
Linda Sheehan  Planet Pledge, USA
Leonardo Boff  Brasil
Carolyn Raffensperger  Rights of Future Generation, EU
Bill Twist  Pachamama Alliance, USA

Maria Mercedes  UN/Harmony with Nature
Alicia Jimenez  Earth Charter, Costa Rica
Patricia Sierra  CEJ – USA
Lisa Mead  Earth Law Alliance, UK
Esperanza Martinez  Acción Ecológica, Ecuador

Atossa Soltani, Amazon Watch/Christensen Fund, USA
Tom Brenan, Gaia Foundation, France
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 Amazonónico (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

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

NORTH AMERICA
Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) www.celdf.org
Global Exchange www.globalexchange.org
The Pachamama Alliance www.pachamama.org
Council of Canadians www.canadians.org

AUSTRALIA

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
Ecoillage Huehuetocoyotl, Tezozólnán Morelos http://www.huehuetocoyotl.net
Edible Planet www.EdiblePlanet.org
Ejagwod-Ghana
Empowerment works www.empowermentworks.org
End Ecocide on Earth http://www.endecocide.org
Environmental Education Fund http://environmentaleducationfund.org
The Enviro Show www.enviroshow.org
Eratadating Ecocide www.eradatingecocide.com
Eros Global Community www.eroscommunity.blogspot.com
La Esperanto-Kluo Sudtirolo esperantosudtirolo.wordpress.com
Flutewalker Musical Arts www.flutewalker.com
Food and Trees for Africa www.trees.co.za
Foundation for a Sustainable Future www.sustainable-future.org
FourYears.Go www.fouryears.go.org
Fundacion Solon. advser, Bolivia La fundacion PACMA www.pacmapacma.com
Gaia University www.gaiauniversity.org
Gaia Foundation, UK Gaia Spirit Foundation www.gaiaSpiritfoundation.org
Global Advocates for Justice (Kenya) fssg.blogspot.com
Grà Nadur – Nature’s Love granadur.net
Great Lakes Earth Institute www.glei.org
Growing Air Foundation www.growingairfoundation.org
Hapicultural http://hapicultuur.be/
Human Dimensions TV http://www.humanandtv.com
Humanity’s Calling
Indigenous Environmental Network http://www.ienearth.org
Institute of Wellbeing wbobd.org
Inter_Culture www.inter-culture.com
International Funders for Indigenous Peoples www.internationalfunders.org
International Organization Childhood Cancer / Organizacion Internacional Del Cancer Infantil OICI www.OICI.com.ar
International Public Policy Institute (IPPI) http://www.ippiun.org
Iracambi en.Iracambi.com
Keep Nature Green www.Keepnaturegreen.com
Lemkin House http://lemkinhouse.org
Long Branch Environmental Education Center http://www.longbrancheec.org/home
Marian County Community Rights http://marioncommunityrights.wordpress.com
Mercy Global Action www.mercyworld.org
Ministry of Animals http://ministroyofanimals.wordpress.com
Movement Rights – USA
Native Women’s Association of Canada www.nwac.ca
Nature’s Friends www.naturesfriends.coop
New Earth Institute www.newearth.institute
One World Awake www.oneworldawake.com
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.pachamamaramonia.ro
Pan African Climate Justice Alliance www.pajca.org
Painted Monkey – DOWS Radio Polidoc Productions www.polidoc.com
Project 90 by 2030 www.90x2030.org.za
Pypac Cosmos – Accra Ghana
Rainbow Peace Caravan www.caravanaarcoiris.blogspot.com
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Red Bear Healing Home Society www.redbearhealinghome.ca
Resistance – Holistic Health Studio http://www.resistente.com
Rigos of Mother Earth Signature Campaign www.rightsofmotherearth.com
Sign our petition for the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth Save the Earth Campaign www.savetheearth cambodia.org
Share the World’s Resources www.stwr.org
Solidarity International www.sol-inter.org
South Gate News www.south-gate-news.com
Spreading Planetary Awareness
Awarement www.facebook.com/spreadingplanetaryawareness
Surya Namaskar for World Peace www.suryanamaskarforworldpeace.org
SouthWest Pride, Inc. http://swpride.org"
Sublime www.sublime.net
Sustainable Summer sustainablesummer.org
Tanka Foundation www.TankaFoundation.org
The Bridge www.thebridgetampa.com
Transition Express www.TransitionExpress.vpweb.com
Uganda Coalition www.ugandacoalition.org
Unified Field Applied World www.unifiedfieldworld.org
Vital Systems www.vitalsystems.ca
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/TechSkepsUnlimited
Women’s Earth and Climate Caucus www.iwecc.org
World Consciousness Pact worldconsciouspact.org
Yoga et Sante www.yogacenturante.net/Youth Ecology Club – Serbia
Zero Waste Kaiui www.zerowastekauai.org
The Ziraat Concentration of North America www.ziraat.org
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://therightofnature.org/ga-ron-video/)

KEY DATES

2006 - TAMACOA 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.

12/2010 - 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-GENERALhttp://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 25) 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.
RMahon, A Snapshot for 2017: Why This Is a Key Moment

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.