

ROOTED IN ETHICS

THE COMMUNITY TREE STEWARDSHIP FRAMEWORK

Honouring life through a biocultural
rights-based approach to care for trees
and communities

Edition 1
2024

TreeSisters & The Fountain





Rooted in Ethics: The Community Tree Stewardship Framework is accompanied by the Practices Guide to support communities, organisations and funders in applying the framework.

Rooted in Ethics: The Community Tree Stewardship Framework
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First Edition

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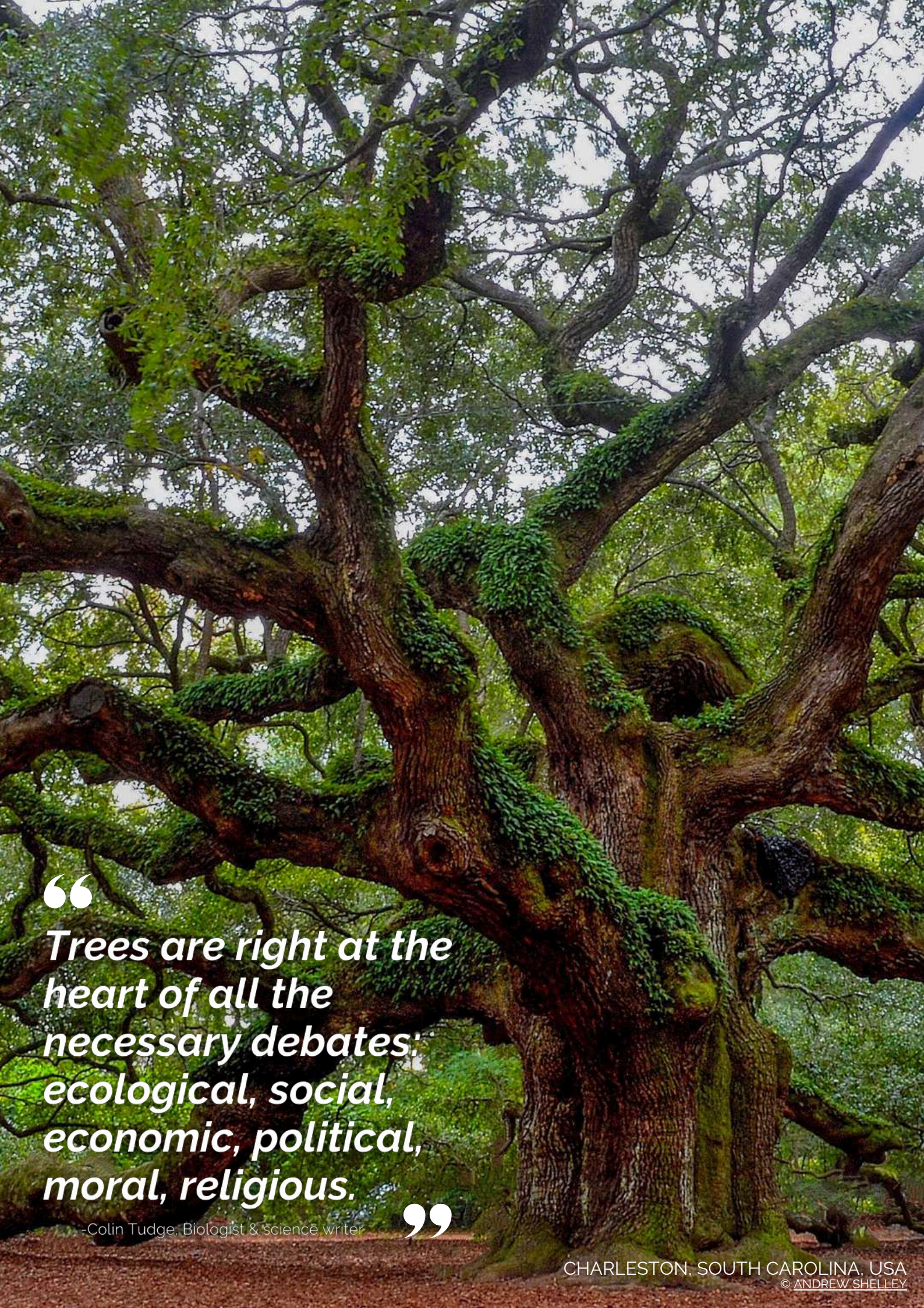
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“

Trees are right at the heart of all the necessary debates: ecological, social, economic, political, moral, religious.

”

-Colin Tudge, Biologist & science writer

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Over five years and across various lands, many people, communities and organisations have generously contributed their time, expertise and support to this project. Their dedication to nurturing trees and communities is truly appreciated. Each of them has played a significant role in this project; for that, The Fountain and TreeSisters extend our heartfelt gratitude.

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For a full list of individuals and organisations who were present for the inaugural meeting on the 1st of May, 2019, in Oxford or who joined later sessions, please see Appendix 6.

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To learn more about implementing the Community Tree Stewardship Framework, refer to the Practices Guide, a supplementary document.



FOREWORD & NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Sital Punja, Chair &
Georgina Gorman, Executive
Director, TreeSisters



The TreeSisters team is honoured that The Fountain has chosen to walk this path with us and has trusted us in this process. Through the Listening Process with them and the Mother Earth Delegation, as well as our relationships with our planting partners, we have heard many concerns regarding tree, land and community care and the impacts of colonisation. Issues of power imbalances, not listening to local communities, problems with carbon certification, laborious monitoring, and a focus on mass scale at low cost. All of which have hampered the potential positive impact of restoration efforts.

And TreeSisters are not immune to these criticisms. We had also fallen into a transactional approach to restoration, focusing on scale and "tree price" rather than the broader and more holistic environmental, Nature and community impacts and systemic change. By accepting a conventional reforestation monitoring approach, we unintentionally adopted methods that perpetuated colonialist and patriarchal thinking. We'll never solve problems while maintaining the same structures that created them.

Through the co-development of this framework with the involvement of Original Peoples and Nations represented by The Fountain, TreeSisters has gained a deeper understanding of ethical tree growing and forest and land restoration. It has been a profound experience for our organisation and team members, transforming our approach and priorities.

"Entering into a relationship and the listening process facilitated by Jyoti Ma with Mindahi Bastida and representatives of the Mother Earth

Delegation has been one of the greatest privileges of my working life and has fundamentally changed my outlook. It demonstrated that TreeSisters' experiences regarding our connections with trees are part of a global phenomenon of the human relationship in Nature as Nature. "

- Suzi Steer, Project Coordinator & Lead Editor,
TreeSisters

The words within this document advocate for and propose that we can put ethics front and centre in forest and land restoration; we can honour and recognise a tree's inherent rights; we can uplift and support communities regenerating the lands they are connected with, and we can promote gender equity and women's empowerment in projects and decision-making.

However, none of this happens alone. We want to express our immense gratitude to all the individuals and organisations who have supported us in this work and the many academics and institutions whose work we have referenced in the endnotes. We consider this only the beginning of a path of continuous learning and improvement. We hope this will open up conversations and create a space where we can welcome ideas and work together to bring about meaningful change.

We look forward to feedback and further discussion with those engaged in forest and land restoration and anyone who cares about trees, communities and freedom.

Thank you.

PREFACE

Mindahi Bastida, Otomi-Toltec Nation & Lead Author on behalf of The Fountain



Honouring life is all about the care of life. This precious document, where many organisations and people participated, is a toolkit for the regeneration and reconnection with Nature, through the trees. We can learn from Nature relationships, ethical principles and working practices when we care for trees.

This Community Tree Stewardship Framework reflects interconnectedness with life, beings, colours, all forms of trees, bushes, nests and all that exists in the forest. It's not just for people doing reforestation; it's also about reconnecting in spirit, mind and body.

The forest is a living entity with many connections and especially with the Sky, the Earth and beauty. Losing it is like losing a

language of Good Living. Carrying out care for trees, we restore and reconnect with Nature and the beauty of life. Biocultural practices with the forest can be strengthened when we have healthy trees.

The forest is the trees, the forest peoples, the animals, the beauty of colours, foods, seeds, flowers, fungi, and more. It's also a mindscape where we can walk in reverence. If we have issues, we can go into the forest and ask for support from the trees, insects, birds and beings that dwell there. The forest beings are not just the humans; it's all the interrelated beings.

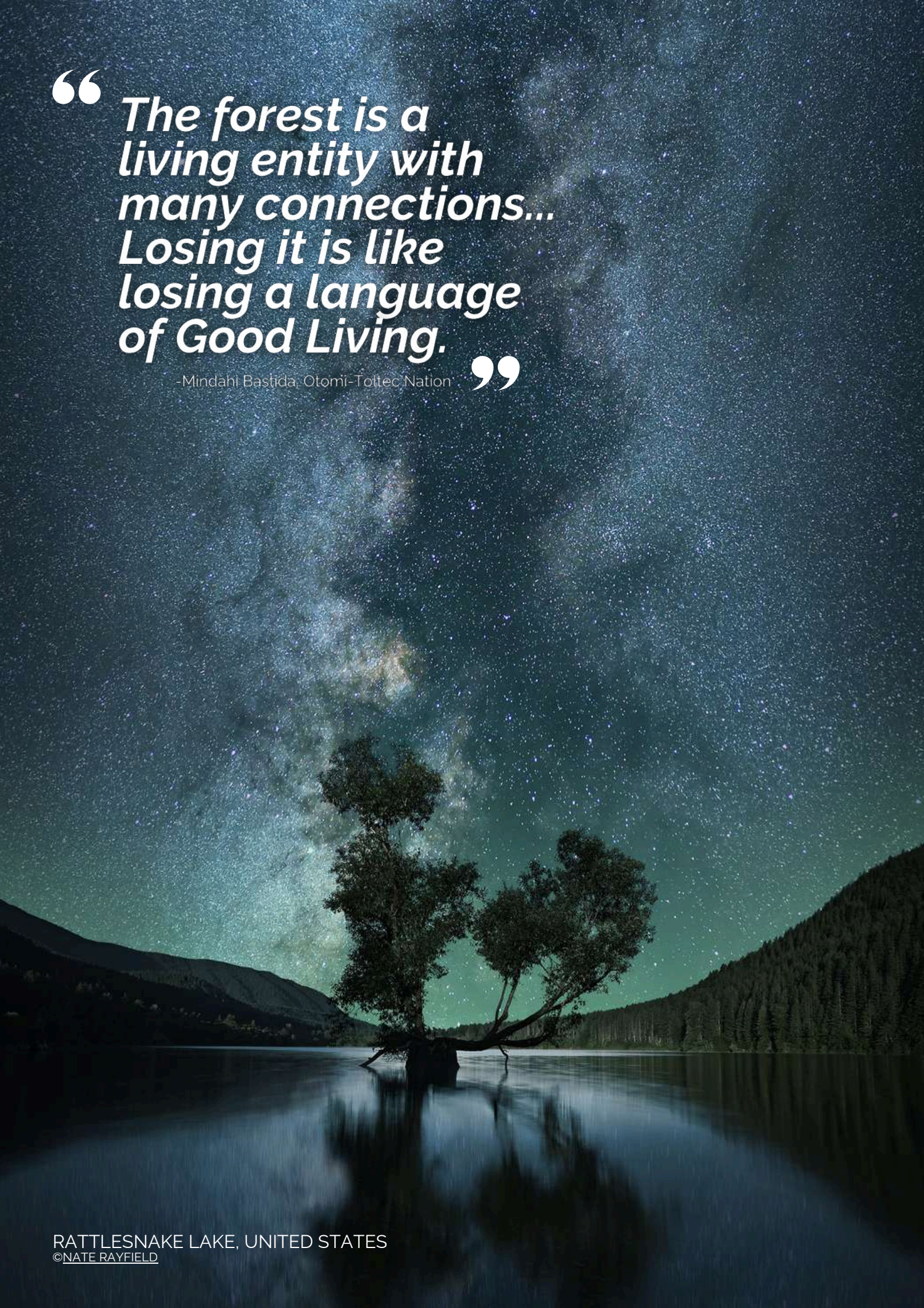
The time for reforestation, regeneration and restoration of life is now. There is no climate justice without forest and climate restoration.

THE CONTEXT OF THIS FIRST EDITION: A MILESTONE ON A JOURNEY

While this framework has been co-written with representation from Original Peoples and Nations, it does not claim to speak on behalf of all Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

This is a first edition drawing from listening processes with multiple organisations and representatives of communities. The text for the Ethical Principles has been shared and agreed with contributors. These documents are not a one-size-fits-all set of definitive statements that can represent the diverse truths of all peoples or sectors. They are living documents and a work in progress, published to reflect where we have got to for the benefit of the communities and people that have been involved, as well as those that would like to become part of this journey.

The editors of the framework welcome direct representation and critiques of this work as part of the Listening Process (see Calls to Action for the Reader).



**“ The forest is a
living entity with
many connections...
Losing it is like
losing a language
of Good Living. ”**

-Mindahi Bastida, Otomí-Toltec Nation

INTRODUCTION

Rooted in Ethics: The Community Tree Stewardship Framework redefines ethical tree growing to include and honour the inherent rights and intelligence of all beings and communities of Nature [1].

WHAT IS ROOTED IN ETHICS: THE COMMUNITY TREE STEWARDSHIP FRAMEWORK?

Rooted in Ethics is a framework based on Pillars of Nature Relationships and Ethical Principles that promote *socially and ecologically beneficial forms of tree growing*. The framework explores a "*biocultural rights-based approach*" to funding and caring for trees and communities [2]. If a word is defined in the glossary, the first instance of that word is in italics.



This document, the first edition of a dynamic resource, is intended to assist small- to large-scale projects, including *reforestation, afforestation, agroforestry, natural regeneration, conservation* and creative site-specific adaptations. The Ethical Principles focus on recognising all beings' inherent rights, *equality*, and interconnectedness within reforestation and conservation efforts and seek to strengthen the implementation of internationally recognised rights (refer to endnotes and appendices for more information). Additionally, the framework places significant emphasis on the role of culture [3] in fostering the relationship between people and *Nature*, both at local [4] and international levels [5]. Accompanying the framework is a separate Practices Guide, which shares TreeSisters' practical experience implementing the Community Tree Stewardship Framework as a collaborative funding model through sets of questions and success milestones for you to consider.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

1. To establish agreed and shared Pillars of Nature Relationships, Ethical Principles and working practices that provide a sound basis for successful *forest and land restoration* and long-term ecosystem care.
2. To support communities in maintaining and strengthening flourishing cultural relationships with *intelligent* living landscapes [6], including promoting *self-determination* by ensuring decision-making that affects communities is taken at the level that allows for the community's full, ongoing participation [7].
3. To support Original Nations and Peoples and all local communities in identifying ethical forest and land restoration, tree planting and funding sources that align with their needs.

4. To inspire *tree growing* and encourage community-based organisations, businesses, and local governments to review, adopt and implement the Pillars of Nature Relationships and Ethical Principles outlined in this framework.
5. To contribute to public discussion regarding the practical implications of our relationship with Nature as beings of Nature ourselves – both within individuals' lives and in terms of humanity's role as an integral component of Earth's intelligent living systems.

WHO ARE THE INTENDED AUDIENCES?

- Local communities, individuals, groups and organisations caring for trees, initiating tree growing, and engaging in the ongoing care of existing older trees and forests.
- *Original Peoples and Nations*, African-descended peoples, rural and mobile peoples, and youth looking to strengthen understanding of biocultural *protocols* and the meaningful participation of women in decision-making through self-determined organisations and councils.
- Funders, donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and policymakers looking to understand and fund best practices of support for trees, lands and communities.
- Anyone interested in ethical care for the Earth, including how *deep listening* has shaped the Pillars of Nature Relationships, Ethical Principles, and the accompanying Practices Guide and how that could be relevant to their choices, community organisations, businesses, and work.

WHO CREATED THIS FRAMEWORK?

The initial intention to create a set of ethics to describe community-oriented conservation and reforestation came from the seed of an idea shared by Andy Egan at the Tree Conference 2017 hosted by Suzi Steer. This idea was given momentum at a gathering co-hosted by International Tree Foundation (ITF) and TreeSisters on the 1st of May, 2019, in Oxford. The gathering included tree- and community-oriented international NGOs and individuals (see Appendix 6). The first code of ethics and working practices were drafted by Andy Egan while at ITF, and he continued working on the project while consulting for TreeSisters in 2019. The text evolved in collaboration with ITF, TreeAid, Trees for the Future, WeForest and Crowther Labs, and the ongoing work was undertaken by TreeSisters, coordinated and edited by Suzi Steer.

In 2020, TreeSisters brought the intention, code of ethics and working practices to The Fountain. The Fountain supports representatives of Original Peoples and Nations through the Mother Earth Delegation and working groups. The framework and Practices Guide has evolved over a two-year listening process and collaboration between TreeSisters and The Fountain with representation from the Mother Earth Delegation of United Original Nations. In-depth and fundamental input has been provided by Mindahi Bastida of the Otomi-Toltec, the then Director of Original Nations Program with The Fountain. For the Listening Process Methodology, see Appendix 1. The work was developed under the Ethical Tree Growing Framework title, then changed to reflect the outcomes of the Listening Process.

With the kind support of ITF, copyright is shared between The Fountain and TreeSisters to honour the depth and detail of collaborative work on the framework. Both TreeSisters and The Fountain are enormously grateful to all the individuals, organisations and Nations named in the acknowledgements and Appendix 6 and also the *lands*, trees and waters that have supported and nourished them.

WHY IS THIS FRAMEWORK OF ETHICS NEEDED?

The critical role of forests in restoring both *biodiversity* and climate stability means non-governmental organisations, citizens, businesses, governments and countries are looking towards tree planting at scale as a solution [8]. This significant increase in tree planting efforts necessitates a shared and agreed understanding of ethical tree growing that results in healthy trees, healthier ecosystems, more equitable human interactions and a culture of caring for the Earth.

When tree planting is undertaken at scale without a framework of ethics or understanding of cultural needs, there is a risk of practices that lead to harm. These can include:

- **GREENWASHING.** A "green" agenda for increased canopy cover can become a greenwash for activities, groups, technological systems and biotech sciences that otherwise maintain old systems of domination over humans and ecosystems.
- **SYSTEMS OF DOMINATION AND CONTROL.** A top-down or power-over approach towards land and people cannot adequately or appropriately meet the needs of individuals, peoples and territories [9]. This has led to disempowerment, *land grabbing*, *fortress conservation* and human rights abuses that deeply affect Original Peoples and local communities on every continent [10]. This approach can create detrimental environmental outcomes [11] and is linked to resource extraction that can devastate ecosystems and communities [12].
- **EROSION OF BIOCULTURE, BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPES.** There is a risk that organisations and governments seeking to meet tree-planting commitments at scale will employ low-biodiversity monoculture plantations or locally inappropriate species [13]. Such plantings have sometimes replaced previous culturally embedded farming practices that supported healthy biodiversity. Such plantations have negatively impacted local communities and ecosystems and eroded *biocultural heritage* and diversity [14].
- **COMMODIFICATION OF NATURE.** Treating Nature as a resource to be exploited or traded rather than an interconnected living system to be nurtured risks creating solutions that perpetuate the systemic and socio-economic harms endemic to colonisation and international financial markets.

Awareness of these risks and placing care for the Earth, people and cultures at the centre of our working practices can reduce the likelihood of harm in ecosystem regeneration work while improving biodiversity and other ecological outcomes.

This framework complements and differs from existing standards of ecosystem restoration by centring and standing in allyship with the cultural *wisdoms* and current experience of Original Peoples, Nations, and many local communities in relation to the inherent rights of beings of Nature. This shift in strategy is based on the understanding that standing in allyship and protecting and strengthening biocultural relationships requires change at a systemic level.

HOW CAN BIOCULTURAL RIGHTS-BASED ETHICS GUIDE POSITIVE SOLUTIONS?

“Two-Eyed Seeing – *Learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.”*

Adam Marshall [15]

The methodology of the Community Tree Stewardship Framework is that ethics and working practices that are informed by listening and are then shared and mutually agreed upon can provide a sound basis for positive solutions that are aligned to long-term care for trees and communities. The Ethical Principles and practices articulated in this document, and the Practices Guide focus on strengthening our cultural understanding of care of Nature, Earth's living systems and ourselves. Shared and agreed ethics and working practices support the intercultural and interdisciplinary collaboration that is needed to fund and care for communities, trees and ecosystems. By knowing human and community rights and the inherent rights of beings in major living systems such as forests, freshwater rivers and mountains, we can see where they are infringed upon and discern how to work together to regenerate healthy ecosystems.

The Listening Process that has informed this work (see appendix 1) shows that the bridge that unites the *ancestral wisdom* of Original Peoples and Nations with *Western science*-informed approaches to forest and landscape restoration is to recognise Earth and all beings in the Earth's biosphere, as having *consciousness*, intelligence and inherent rights, and being interconnected [16]. The Ethical Principles acknowledge the enshrined legal rights and conventions (see appendix 5) that support *Biocultural Community Protocols* [17], land tenure, the inherent rights of beings of Nature [18] and human *rights-based conservation* [19].

“Enhancing the role of collective actions, including by indigenous peoples and local communities, Mother Earth-centric actions and non-market-based approaches.”

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework - Target 19F [20]

The Community Tree Stewardship Framework advances a biocultural rights-based approach to caring for Earth's ecosystems by acknowledging that all communities and beings of Nature have these inherent rights prior to those outlined in current international agreements with respect to human, indigenous and community rights. For a fuller explanation of the use of the term biocultural, see Appendix 2.

Mindahi's guidance for understanding the relationship between the text of this framework, the *Knowledge* it's based on and its practical implementation

INFORMATION

Information, such as the words in the CTSF, describes knowledge that has arisen from wisdom.

KNOWLEDGE

The knowledge of care for lands is specific to how and where it's arisen. Examples include regional Biocultural Community Protocols.

WISDOM(S)

Wisdom is how knowledge is listened for and applied in experience, insights, practical choices and common sense.

HOW TO USE THE FRAMEWORK

The development of Rooted in Ethics: The Community Tree Stewardship Framework is part of an ongoing Listening Process with living documents expressed through editions, toolkits and communities of practice.


1. **Review:** You're invited to explore, review and provide feedback on this framework and the Practices Guide. Find out how to share feedback in the Calls to Action for the Reader section that follows the main framework text.
2. **Implement:** You are invited to use this framework and some or all of the Practices within your own community, organisation or funding body. The Practices Guide provides questions and success milestones for implementing the framework.

WHAT EACH DOCUMENT COVERS:



Future editions and toolkits based on feedback will be focused on meeting the needs of the audiences outlined below:

REGIONAL BIOCULTURAL EDUCATORS	FOREST & WATER GUARDIANS	INDIVIDUALS
COMMUNITIES	FARMERS & LAND MANAGERS	POLICY & SCIENCE RESEARCHERS
FUNDING BODIES & DONORS	REFORESTATION & CONSERVATION NGOS	BUSINESSES



“
*Trees do not
preach learning
and precepts. They
preach, undeterred
by particulars, the
ancient law of life.*

— Herman Hesse, Nobel prize winning
poet, novelist, and painter.

”

CAIRNS, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA
©DAVID CLODE



MAIN TEXT

ROOTED IN ETHICS:

The Community Tree Stewardship Framework

DRAFT

*“All our
wisdom is
stored in the
trees.”*

— Dr Santosh Kalwar,
poet, writer, and researcher.





PILLARS OF NATURE RELATIONSHIPS

The pillars arise from *Traditional Ecological Knowledge* describing agreements between humanity and the plant kingdom [21]. They represent the appropriate approach to entering into and maintaining ongoing *beneficial relationships* [22] with beings of Nature (human and non-human). If you would like more information, please see Appendix 3.

In the Listening Process (see Appendix 1) between the conservation and forest and land restoration organisations and representatives of Original Peoples and Nations, the language has been adapted and agreed upon to bridge Western and Indigenous audiences. The goal has been to maintain a core understanding of protocols for beneficial working relationships in Nature while removing spiritual, religious or cultural connotations that could lead to losing shared understanding.

1. RECEPTIVE

Being receptive to Nature relationships speaks to being open to experiential and scientific research-based learning. An example is learning directly through listening, sensing, and observing in open enquiry with beings and ecosystems. Being receptive and listening includes the willingness to allow plans, perspectives and projects to be fundamentally transformed by what is being shared. This willingness to be changed is an example of what is required in ongoing relationships to respect *Free, Prior and Informed Consent* [23]. The guidance from representatives of Traditional Ecological Knowledge is that being receptive to Nature relationships includes reverence for Nature and *Mother Earth* as sacred [24]. Reverence calls forth receptivity to a more profound quality of awareness, honouring, relationship and action that seeks to serve all. It is often described as a feeling of awe for Nature's beauty, intelligence and mystery that leads to being receptive to what a being is.

2. RECIPROCAL

Reciprocity requires us, individually and collectively, to give back with gratitude and care in recognition of what we have been given. It means we recognise our interconnectedness and act in ways that promote health and balance in all life. Entering a reciprocal relationship with Nature and Mother Earth includes a responsibility and obligation to listen and take care of territories and to engage in ongoing, *conscious*, appropriately scaled, respectful and ethical ecosystem restoration. Reciprocity does not legitimise the idea that ecological damage in one place can be “cancelled out” by enhancements elsewhere.

“Reciprocity is the foundation that underpins all our relationships; it is the lens through which we look at all relationships, both human and non-human. Reciprocity is the essence of how we give and receive. It maintains the cycle of life and the sustainability of our people.”

Roberta Jamieson, Mohawk Nation [25]

3. RESPECTFUL

Respect is an indispensable foundation for healthy relationships between humanity and the rest of the living world. Respectful relationships are embodied in actions that safeguard and serve life. This is recognised worldwide by individuals, Original Nations and Peoples, local communities and organisations who live in ways that seek to serve and strengthen the cycles and the web of life. Behaving respectfully includes honouring all beings' gifts, wisdom, integrity and inherent rights by being receptive to them and ensuring the relationship is honoured reciprocally.



Do you think these Pillars of Nature Relationships provide an appropriate framework for forest and land restoration?



**“ Learn character
from trees, values
from roots and
change from leaves.**

-Tasneern Harneed, Peace Activist

”



ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The Ethical Principles are guided by and are extensions of the Pillars of Nature Relationships. They are supported by collaborators to the Community Tree Stewardship Framework as scientific and social best practices for caring for communities, engaging in biocultural restoration and caring for trees. Each comes with success milestones for implementation within a local context.

The Ethical Principles speak to the "rights-based" aspect of the framework. The references to international frameworks and agreements upholding rights are in the endnotes and Appendix 5, and for notes on the Ethical Principles, see Appendix 4.



This edition draws from listening processes with multiple organisations and representatives of communities. Now it's your turn to review and reflect on the text for the Ethical Principles shared and agreed upon with contributors.

The goal is to articulate a shared and agreed set of ethics that can provide an appropriate framework for a biocultural rights-based approach to forest and land restoration and guide systemic change in human systems towards protecting and regenerating Earth's living systems.

For examples of how to implement the Ethical Principles, please see the Practices Guide.



Do the following statements provide an appropriate framework for honouring trees in forest and land restoration?

1. HONOURING OF TREES

- Trees and forests often have deep cultural and spiritual significance to local peoples [26]. Both species and individual trees may have sacred status, be used in rituals, provide ingredients for medicines and cultural foods or have symbolic importance for ethnicity, lineage, identity or place connection. Trees also play a central role in stories, myths and histories and are often respected as beings in their own right [27].
- Listening and learning from those who treat all life as sacred informs scientific understanding and collaborative working practices around respect for trees [28], especially for protecting existing trees, sacred [29] or threatened species, orchards, groves and ancient forests [30].
- Ecologically and culturally significant trees are defined by the biological role of the tree as established network hubs for multiple trees in a landscape [31]; their ecological roles, especially in water and climate systems [32]; their biocultural roles in ancestral wisdom, medicine, food, heat and construction; and their conservation needs in terms of survival of specific native species [33].
- Honouring trees requires listening for and identifying the needs of trees generally (see appendix 4) and in a given landscape and ensuring that tree growing is based on the best ecological and scientific knowledge available.
- International & national frameworks that recognise ethically responsible handling of genetic materials data, the release of modified genetic organisms and the rights of peoples to safeguard traditional plants [34], minerals and forests can contribute towards honouring trees and their ecosystems (available in appendix 5).

SUCCESS MILESTONE:

Projects consider the existence and maintenance of ecologically and culturally significant trees.





Do you think the following statements provide an appropriate framework to describe the inherent rights of Nature and requirements for ecosystem integrity in forest and land restoration?

2. ECOSYSTEM INTEGRITY & THE RIGHTS OF NATURE & MOTHER EARTH

- Inherent rights describe the inherent right to exist on Earth. A being of Nature, such as a mountain, exists and has the inherent right to exist [35].
- Recognising Mother Earth and all beings of Nature as existing and therefore having inherent rights [36].
- Acknowledging Nature and the Earth as existing prior to the formation of the human construct of rights.
- Humans can recognise the inherent rights of living beings. Humans do not grant those inherent rights as Nature and the Earth existed prior to the formation of the concept of rights.
- Honouring wisdom-keepers of *Original Principles and protocols* and their guardianship and sharing of how to maintain receptive, reciprocal and respectful Nature relationships (see appendix 3).
- Respecting and integrating this knowledge into working practices and business and scientific research, especially regarding protecting ecosystem integrity [37], and learning from practices that bring a representation of beings of Nature into decision-making (see Practices Guide). This way of working includes referencing up-to-date scientific data regarding the needs of species, water, soils and climate in ecosystems alongside observing Free, Prior and Informed Consent with communities as a baseline.
- Establishing and maintaining trust-based relationships with communities to create mutual understanding where local knowledge can be welcomed and shared with appropriate protocols around knowledge respected [38].
- The development of Earth Jurisprudence [39] and "Mother Earth-centric actions" [40] in resource management, legal, policy and educational systems is acknowledged [41].

SUCCESS MILESTONE:

Working practices and conservation science incorporate local traditional knowledge and culture effectively, *in situ* and systemically, to care for all beings in ecosystems.



Do the following statements regarding local community involvement provide an appropriate framework for forest and land restoration?

3. COLLABORATION & ONGOING RELATIONSHIPS

- The needs of the land are usually best met through people who know it and will live in it for the long term – recognising the paramount role of Original Peoples and Nations, forest-dwellers, forest-dependent communities and traditional farmers in protecting the integrity of territories through bioculturally significant protocols and Ancestral Wisdoms [42].
- Recognising the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent as a baseline in all activities [43].
- Seeking to deepen ongoing relationships that honour and develop the expression of the needs of lands through the actions of all collaborators [44].
- Celebrating tree care projects that arise from local communities and respecting self-determination and decision-making at the most effective level (subsidiarity principle [45]).
- Recognising the importance of involving Original Nations and communities initially and ongoingly in decision-making processes as partners to meet the needs of self-determination and empowerment [46].
- Supporting collaborative and reciprocal relationships community-to-community, farmer-to-farmer and peer-to-peer (see Practices Guide).

SUCCESS MILESTONE:

Respect self-determination and Free, Prior and Informed Consent. Original Nations and communities are initially and ongoing in decision-making processes as partners.



Do the following statements regarding the relationships between people, place, culture, and the digital realm provide an appropriate framework for forest and land restoration?

4. COMMUNITY RIGHTS, LAND TENURE & INDIGENOUS DATA SOVEREIGNTY

- Supporting processes and strengthening community abilities to safeguard and enhance Traditional Ecological and *Biocultural Knowledge* [47].
- Celebrating the recognition of Biocultural Community Protocols at local and international levels [48].
- Bringing awareness and honouring appropriate protocols for sharing knowledge and ensuring data collection respects CARE principles for Indigenous Data Governance (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility & Ethics) [49]. Giving extra precautions regarding the transfer of any genetic material and natural resources.
- Acknowledging the retelling of stories across generations as an act of *Indigenous data sovereignty* [50].
- Recognising the connection between Peoples and land is essential to individual and collective relationships with Earth, both as land tenure and as a voice in the global community on behalf of lands.
- Acknowledging and actively safeguarding the relationship between lands, peoples, cultures, languages, practices, food, mental and physical health, rights, education, empowerment and sovereignty [51]. Understanding that this is true for those who are not rights holders, those with land tenure and those who have migrated to new lands. Through a biocultural paradigm, acknowledging the land itself needs the people who know and care for it.
- Respecting safeguards around land tenure as articulated in existing frameworks, particularly concerning women, rural communities and Original Peoples and Nations (see Appendix 5).
- Drawing attention to women's unequal access to, and beneficial ecological and socio-economic outcomes of supporting women's access to, land tenure and property (see Ethical Principle 6. Gender Equity & Including Women in Community Decision Making).
- Upholding all rights granted through the recognition of human rights, to freedoms regarding cultural beliefs and therefore to attributions of agency to specific beings of Nature [52], including agricultural practices that support and are in harmony with Nature [53].

SUCCESS MILESTONE:

Communities and individuals are supported to access and strengthen their community rights and access to land tenure. Biocultural Knowledge and data sovereignty are managed according to the protocols of the communities and Nations where they originate.



Do the following statements regarding human rights and individual sovereignty provide an appropriate framework for forest and land restoration?

5. HUMAN RIGHTS & SOVEREIGNTY

- Respecting all human beings as sovereign in their own right, their rights to life, and their right to access healthy living systems [54].
- Acknowledging the inalienable human rights recognised in international agreements, declarations and covenants, including self-determination and fundamental freedoms [55].
- Upholding the rights of Original Peoples and all local communities to defend, protect and restore the forests on which they, and all of life, depend [56] and identifying these rights as relevant for all communities.
- Promoting safe forums that hold space for honest and deep listening to the needs of multiple stakeholders and ensuring the inclusion of women, young people and marginalised voices in decision-making processes.

DRAFT

SUCCESS MILESTONE:

All human rights are respected, and people involved in tree care efforts experience meaningful participation.





Do the following statements regarding gender equity and the necessity of including women in decision-making regarding land care provide an appropriate framework for forest and land restoration?

6. GENDER EQUITY & INCLUDING WOMEN IN COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING

- In recognition of the inherent rights to self-determination and freedoms of all beings, respect is given to the sovereignty of individuals' wishes and choices regarding their gender identity and bodily autonomy.
- Gender equity includes the spectrum of genders recognised by bioregional communities. All genders need equal access to trees and forests for mental and physical health.
- Acknowledging that cultural, social, institutional, political and economic inequalities and land grabs limit women's ability to participate fully in restoring, regenerating and protecting land and ecosystems and that these inequalities can also impact all genders.
- Research shows rights-based approaches that recognise and respect the tenure rights, priorities and needs of rural and Indigenous women lead to favourable outcomes [57]. Acknowledging that there has been insufficient research into the favourable outcomes of including all genders in rights-based approaches to land care.
- In addressing gender equity for all genders and the impacts of modern-day colonisation, women need to be recognised as primary users of forest resources, holding important knowledge of forests and playing key roles in food systems.
- Supporting gender equity as a goal in and of itself and affirming that tree-growing activities that are gender inclusive are more successful [58].
- Ensuring active and equitable representation by women in design, decision-making and implementation of projects [59] and making accurate and deliberate efforts to ensure the needs and wisdom of women are heard and acted on [60].

SUCCESS MILESTONE:

Deliberate efforts are made to ensure gender equity and active and equitable women's leadership in design, decision-making and implementation of projects, which is essential for the attainment of both environmental and social justice.



Does the following summary of what eliminates systemic harms and promotes harmony and balance provide an appropriate framework for forest and land restoration?

7. ELIMINATING HARM & PROMOTING HARMONY & BALANCE

- Addressing historical and current harm to cultures and ecosystems, advocating for a biocultural rights-based approach to forest and land restoration that safeguards inherent rights through eco-centered listening, restorative justice, and collaboration with Traditional Ecological Knowledge.
- Recognising that historical and current social and cultural paradigms can unintentionally and intentionally cause harm when overlaid onto pre-existing cultures and ecosystems [61]. Historical and present-day systemic abuses of lands, ecosystems, freshwaters, Original Peoples and Nations, communities, individuals, cultures and genetic materials are recognised as causal factors affecting climate, ecosystem, biodiversity, seed diversity, and human and cultural health.
- Identifying systemic abuses as endemic to colonising approaches where power is imposed over the inherent rights of any being's rights to life and freedoms, causing harm.
- Witnessing that human and community rights abuses go hand in hand with ecosystem destruction [62]. Focus is on redressing the impacts of forcible or subtle disconnection of beings from their lands and cultures. Modern-day slavery, bonded labour, techniques of divide and rule, mental, physical, socio-economic and cultural suppression and the destruction and plundering of habitats and ecosystems on which communities depend are harms that must end.
- Seeking to eliminate harm and promote harmony and balance by exploring a biocultural, rights-based approach in practical and systemic actions. Eliminating systemic abuses, colonising mindsets and injustice from thinking, behaviours, organisational cultures, working practices and conservation measures.
- Actively promoting eco-centred listening, restorative justice, and legal, financial, technical, governance and cultural systems aligned to safeguarding all beings' inherent rights. Particular care is given to supporting freedom, community togetherness and representation for all beings in decision-making and safeguarding old-growth forests, genetic integrity, diversity, healthy soils, food, water and climatic systems (see Practices Guide).
- Strengthening variation and collaboration of bioregional cultures, economies, and financial mechanisms and celebrating iterative results of best practices that enhance a life-oriented approach [63].
- Respecting Traditional Ecological Knowledge as a source of bioethics and inspiring creative, adaptive solutions aligned to the long-term care of life.

SUCCESS MILESTONE:

Ecological economic development is aligned with the needs of the global community and Earth's living systems.

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a lush, green forest. The river is dark and reflects the surrounding trees. The forest is dense with various shades of green, and some white flowers are visible in the lower right quadrant.

“
*There is no power
for change greater
than a community
discovering what it
cares about.*”

-Margaret J. Wheatley, Writer & Teacher

CALLS TO ACTION FOR THE READER

If these Pillars of Nature Relationships and Ethical Principles resonate with you as an individual, group, organisation, community, business or representative of any collective, please let us know by supporting Rooted in Ethics: The Community Tree Stewardship Framework as an example of a rights-based biocultural approach by engaging in the calls to action below.

If any of the Pillars of Nature Relationships and Ethical Principles do not resonate, please share with us why. The listening process around this document needs constructive criticism as well as support.



Are these Nature relationships and ethics part of the future you would like to see? Hearing from you helps us evolve better shared understanding, more effective working practices and advocate on behalf of life.

CALLS TO ACTION FOR THIS FRAMEWORK

1. **SIGN UP** to show your support and advocacy for these Pillars of Nature Relationships and Ethical Principles.
2. **SHARE** your feedback on the Pillars of Nature Relationships, Ethical Principles, Success Milestones or your experiences, stories and case studies via our online form or social media platforms.
3. **SUPPORT** TreeSisters and The Fountain financially by donating directly to either organisation as an individual, organisation or business partner to fund our independent charitable activities or to fund further collaboration on this project.

CALLS TO ACTION FOR THE PRACTICES GUIDE – FOR ORGANISATIONS, COMMUNITIES AND FUNDING GROUPS

Do you represent a community already living and working in a way that respects rights of Nature, or would you like to explore a rights-based biocultural approach and what it means for you?

1. **REVIEW** the Practices Guide to the Community Tree Stewardship Framework. Examples of how groups can support a biocultural rights-based approach are at the beginning of the Practices Guide.
2. **GET IN TOUCH.** Feel welcome to critique and give feedback on the Practices Guide to evolve future versions. Share how you are honouring life and create case studies that demonstrate your working practices.

THE FOUNTAIN & TREESISTERS' NEXT STEPS

TreeSisters, The Fountain and our partner organisations are committed to this journey of discovery to embody a positive future.

ONGOING LISTENING PROCESS JOURNEY WITH AUDIENCES, NETWORKS AND PARTNERS

This first edition of the Community Tree Stewardship Framework creates the opportunity for broader consultation, critical analysis and case studies from which future editions and toolkits can be created. The Listening Process Methodology (see appendix 1) will evolve to meet the needs of this next feedback cycle. The intention is to bring your feedback and our allied organisations and networks together; details will be announced through TreeSisters' monthly email newsletter.

A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE FOUNTAIN AND TREESISTERS

Through the creation of the Community Tree Stewardship Framework, TreeSisters and The Fountain have entered into a formal Memorandum of Understanding agreement, based on both Western law and the ethical crossover of Nature and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Our collective aim is to facilitate the biocultural restoration of Earth by aligning with Original Principles and protocols and the best practices of scientific research. Central to our approach is the shift towards recognising all beings as conscious, intelligent, interdependent entities with agency. This perspective is informed by the appropriate protocols outlined in the Community Tree Stewardship Framework and the associated Listening Process Methodology section. The Fountain and TreeSisters acknowledge the necessity of offering alternative avenues for funding biocultural restoration, landscape care, and community resilience that align with respect, receptivity and reciprocity with Mother Earth.

AREAS OF WORK FOR EACH ORGANISATION

The Fountain

- Support for the Mother Earth Delegation of United Original Nations representatives
- Protection of sacred territories working with sister organisation Centre for Sacred Studies
- Work and training on sacred economics and *decolonisation*

TreeSisters

- Support for TreeSisters' planting partners and communities aligned with their restoration strategy
- Community of practice and future editions and toolkits of the Community Tree Stewardship Framework
- Facilitation of Nature connection and related education resources



WENTWORTH FALLS, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA
©HAMISH WEIR



TREESISTERS RESTORATION STRATEGY AND EVOLVING THE PRACTICES GUIDE

“Forests are restored in a way that supports connections and relationships with Nature, rebalances power dynamics, and respects the knowledge and wisdom of the communities living in these places.”

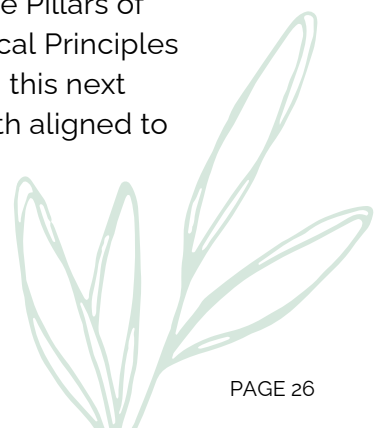
TreeSisters Restoration Strategy

In a mutualistic relationship, the Listening Process for the Community Tree Stewardship Framework has informed our Restoration strategy, and the implementation of our Restoration strategy has informed the Community Tree Stewardship Framework and Practices Guide.

The Restoration Team at TreeSisters refers to the Community Tree Stewardship Framework principles and the Practices Guide to understand if our strategy is achieving the ethical restoration of forests and trees and to support our communication and accountability to funders.

This edition of the Practices Guide includes the learnings from TreeSisters' experiences of practical implementation of the Community Tree Stewardship Framework for the review and benefit of a wider audience. TreeSisters' will continue to listen, learn and evaluate to improve the practices and success milestones.

The Fountain and TreeSisters are looking forward to feedback on the Pillars of Nature Relationships, Ethical Principles and the Practices Guide in this next phase of listening on a path aligned to Nature.





CLOSING REMARKS

Grandmother Jyoti Ma
Executive Director,
The Fountain



Now that you have been able to experience and learn from the Community Tree Stewardship Framework, The Fountain would like to take a moment and recognise the good work that has resulted from a very dedicated process of “deep listening”.

Deep listening allows us to open a dialogue with the Mother Earth and Her Original Peoples, who carry the protocols of Mother Law. It helps us to approach the restoration and regenerative work with respect and regard for a way of life that regards all life as sacred. TreeSisters has been able to access, through deep listening, Earth's story. They have heard and been taught by Ancestral Knowledge the original protocols of the Earth. They have deepened the relations by listening to the land and strengthened the learning by allowing local communities to lead by following the original protocols of the land. This biocultural rights-based approach has evolved through the guidance and wisdom shared by the Elders for future generations.

As Mindahi says, “*The Forest is a living entity with many connections with the Sky and the Earth and the beauty they provide*”.

It is this whole system that is directing and instructing us. We are listening! Through this framework and the Practices Guide, we can explore practical applications working with biocultural protocols.

We are all in this together, learning as we march forward. The times call us into action. It is a time of remembering. It is a time of reconnecting with the nature of ourselves. It is a time to honour the interconnectedness of all life. It is a time which will require our courage. It is a time to humble ourselves and share the diversity of our ways in a collaborative current of unity. Our tall-standing relatives, the trees, are showing us the way!

Jyoti Ma (Jeneane Prevatt, PhD), Delegate of the Mother Earth Delegation of United Original Nations, Founder and Vision Holder for the Centre for Sacred Studies and Co-Convener of the Circle of Thirteen Grandmothers.



“
*Deep listening
allows us to open a
dialogue with the
Mother Earth.*”

—Grandmother Jyoti Ma, The Fountain



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The Listening Process Methodology

The listening process methodology has evolved through the development of the Community Tree Stewardship Framework and Practices Guide. If you would like to get involved in the listening process going forwards, please see the Calls to Action for the Reader.

The challenge. To listen for and evolve a shared understanding of ethical, practical and effective best practice to support trees and communities to survive and thrive long term.

The agreed and shared methodology. To centre the needs of trees and their ecosystems and listen for the different experiential knowledge arising from community relationships with forests in a variety of landscapes.

The Listening Process sessions. Each session of the Listening Process was held by creating a sacred space. At the start of the listening session, a representative of The Fountain or TreeSisters called for the inclusion of all beings of Nature. At the end of the session, the space and what has been shared were honoured and the session closed.

The shared love and appreciation of trees provided the axis around which the differences in cultures, paradigms and worldviews could be explored with open curiosity. Due to the presence and importance of plant life in all lands, this simple focus anchored broad topic matters – which included international and national policies, colonisation, conservation, scientific materialism, Original Principles and protocols, regional biocultural tree knowledge and a host of global systems – from the perspective of their impacts on the relationship between humans, cultures and trees.

Supplementary research. The methodology included recording learnings arising from sessions and cross-referencing them with scientific literature and international agreement texts. Representatives of external organisations such as planting partners and allied organisations in the lands known as Asia, Europe, Australia, Africa, the Americas and the Arctic were also asked for their experience to gain regional perspectives on insights. What was learnt through this research was then brought back into the listening sessions for the reflections of those present.

The writing and editing process. Co-drafting and editing agreed texts has been done through shared documents where verbal and written comments, changes and criticisms could be recorded and reflected upon and then changes shared and agreed on.

The evolution of the Listening Process: Learning and adapting the Listening Process. The Listening Process was adapted through the relationship building and collaboration that led to the Community Tree Stewardship Framework and Practices Guide. After the sessions with the Code of Ethics Working Group (see acknowledgements), TreeSisters recognised that to respect Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a consultation with Indigenous peoples was essential. Advice from Kevin Bayuk and Erin Axelrod of Lift made it clear that this method of consultation was unlikely to be an effective or an appropriate format and that first TreeSisters needed to listen, learn and establish trust-based relationships.

These insights prompted a year of deep listening through fortnightly sessions with representatives from The Fountain and TreeSisters. During this year, representatives from The Fountain and the Mother Earth Delegation provided TreeSisters with the opportunity to listen, learn and gain a better understanding of the diverse perspectives and cultural histories from Original Peoples and Nations. Over time mutual respect, trust and shared and agreed understandings emerged.

In September of 2021, we turned to what we could do together through the text of the Community Tree Stewardship Framework with Mindahi Bastida of the Otomi-Toltec Nation as a representative of the Mother Earth Delegation. These text changes integrated a paradigm shift of understanding of biocultural rights-based care and required a systemic integration of learnings within TreeSisters' own working practices. The experience of working towards integrating learnings organisationally was then brought back into the texts and reappraised by both Mindahi Bastida and the wider Mother Earth Delegation representatives.

The outcomes. Outcomes have focused on finding meaningful and deliberate ways of supporting and strengthening biocultural relationships between communities and their care of trees, land and waters. As part of this process, the values and ethics that facilitate the network of Nature relationships are celebrated as they uphold the freedom, integrity and alignment of Nature and Earth's systems.

The outcomes of this listening process are demonstrated throughout the Community Tree Stewardship Framework and Practices Guide as per the points below:

- The learnings, conclusions, examples of effective values and ethical positions, and the key references to texts used are expressed in the Community Tree Stewardship Framework through the Pillars of Nature Relationships and its Ethical Principles, appendices and endnotes.
- The accompanying Practices Guide focuses on the integration of TreeSisters' learnings and expresses these through sets of working practices that have been reviewed and amended by representatives of external organisations named in the acknowledgements.
- A list of definitions, scientific terms and meanings arising from the Listening Process sessions can be found in the glossary.

The Listening Process Methodology will continue and be adapted to the needs of a wider consultation using this edition of the shared and agreed texts.

Appendix 2: Notes on References to Biocultural

A bioculture (or life-oriented culture) describes cultures, languages and practices that arise from generations of humans listening to all living beings of a given territory as conscious and intelligent. The bioculture passes on, through ancestral wisdom, practices which are essential to maintaining life in that bioregion. Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Original Peoples and Nations are embedded in biocultures and are recognised as a biocultural axiom in which “biological and cultural diversity are mutually dependent and geographically coterminous” [64]. While biocultures are both *ecocentric* and *biocentric*, the latter terms do not speak directly to culture itself. Biocultures have arisen from specific lands and are the embedded ecological best practices in human communities for that region.

Land managers working with deep listening and respect in landscapes and with awareness of cultural histories and community representation are invited to review the Practices Guide to explore how closely a biocultural approach relates to the ways they are already working.

The establishment of Biocultural Community Protocols [65] has been given legal importance in all signatory countries of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Nagoya Protocol [66]. The request to use the term biocultural in the framework emphasises the importance of understanding the cultural relationships to land, place-thought of land and ecosystem care. A biocultural approach recognises the living, cultural Nature relationships between peoples, beings of Nature and the land and waters [67] as vital to the long-term care of communities and trees. Working with awareness of biocultural protocols and inherent rights prevents the repetition of colonisation patterns of peoples, cultures and landscapes. This sensitivity also supports the sharing of the most effective learnings derived from a scientific comprehension of trees, ecosystems, conservation and forest and land restoration [68]. This framework seeks to regenerate culture and Nature relationships between people and land care.

HOW THE LISTENING PROCESS LED TO A BIOCULTURAL APPROACH

In 2019, the text compiled by TreeSisters and the original NGOs described an approach that was “bottom-up” and community-led as a counterpoint to a “top-down” approach. During the Listening Process sessions, Mindahi Bastida of the Otomi-Toltec community pointed out that the “bottom-up” approach still mirrored outdated colonial models. Consequently, the text was revised to refer to a “biocultural” approach, directly reflecting the genuine relationships between communities and land expressed through their living cultures. By heeding the needs of biocultures and adopting a biocultural rights-based approach, all the operational practices within the Community Tree Stewardship Framework underwent fundamental changes. This shift has also led to systemic transformations in TreeSisters' organisational procedures and the collective evolution of mechanisms for listening and evaluation that bolster TreeSisters' accountability. The practical insights gained from implementing these organisational changes are documented in the Practices Guide of the Community Tree Stewardship Framework.

Appendix 3: Notes on the Pillars of Nature Relationships

FOCUSING ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND TREES

The importance of the relationship between people and trees has been integral to developing the Community Tree Stewardship Framework from the outset. Learning more about how this historical relationship has functioned [69] to protect and care for 80% of the world's biodiversity [70] was one of the many drivers for listening to and learning from representatives of Original Peoples and Nations. Therefore, TreeSisters engaged in the Listening Process with The Fountain's representatives.

ACKNOWLEDGING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PILLARS OF NATURE RELATIONSHIPS

The Pillars of Nature Relationships were initially incorporated into the text as values from the work of Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* [71]. Mindahi Bastida and Jyoti Ma from The Fountain then gave background and a fuller understanding of the importance and nature of this relationship in the protocols regarding caring for trees, communities and cultures. Representation regarding regional variance in "original principles, instructions or protocols" and their relationship to Biocultural Community Protocols was provided by the Mother Earth Delegation of United Original Nations [72].

RECOGNISING THE ROLES OF BEINGS OF NATURE AND MOTHER EARTH

The Pillars of Nature Relationships recognise Earth as a conscious, intelligent, multidimensional being nurturing all life and recognise all Earth's living systems and beings of Nature as having vital roles within the well-being of the whole. This approach is reflected in ecological and evolutionary dynamics within ecosystems where all species play crucial roles in the interconnected balance of the entire system.

CAN BEINGS OF NATURE ENTER INTO INTELLIGENT, RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH HUMANS?

Audiences need to be open to exploring ways of relating to all beings of Nature, including mountains, rocks or rivers. How can beings of Nature, or a given landscape, communicate reciprocally in information sharing?

This Framework acknowledges, and aims for compatibility with, the strongly held view of many consultees and stakeholders of the Community Tree Stewardship Framework that all beings of Nature are capable of communicating and that humans are innately equipped, as beings of Nature, to register what is being communicated through their body and relationship with the land and water [73]. By extension, those privileged to have followed a path of focusing their skills have created additional opportunities to collate and share ecological information. Looking ahead, conservation science will need to integrate Traditional Ecological and Biocultural Knowledge regarding the inherent wisdom and rights of beings of Nature while respecting Indigenous data sovereignty [74]. This need is expressed in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework [75], and the Community Tree Stewardship Framework practically explores it in the ethics of a biocultural rights-based approach.

Appendix 4: Notes on the Ethical Principles

The outcomes from the Listening Process have implications beyond the conservation and ecosystem restoration sciences. They recognise that organisations and individuals planting trees with positive intentions also need to address what takes care of those trees and ecosystems systemically. The following section provides some insights into how the understandings of the Listening Process led to the Ethical Principles in this framework.

ELIMINATING HARM & PROMOTING HARMONY & BALANCE

The Ethical Principle of Eliminating Harm and Promoting Harmony and Balance runs clearly through all the ethics upholding inherent and legislative rights. This principle functions at a systemic level of redressing harms arising from the failure to safeguard humanity's Nature connectedness and the inherent rights of communities, cultures and beings of Nature through colonisation. This principle addresses shifting from a human-centred (anthropocentric) perspective to an Earth-centred (ecocentric) one. More details on this can be found in the Practices Guide.

INTEGRATING BIOCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE IN ETHICS

Decolonised environmental land management, conservation, and plant-based approaches systemically integrate local Biocultural Knowledge [76]. Throughout international standards, however, integrating the rights of Nature, Mother Earth, and biocultural wisdoms at this systemic level is lacking. These rights and this Biocultural Knowledge are laterally referenced in declarations on the rights of Indigenous Peoples – and therefore human rights – by safeguarding traditional beliefs and cultures. Recognising beings of Nature as having conscious intelligence is a vital part of integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge into ethics and systems of global governance. It extends an invitation to tend to Nature rather than dominate it as “natural resources”.

In respecting the inherent rights and infinite non-monetary value of all beings, water systems, trees and lands, questions arise regarding international policy adopted in the name of caring for trees and the environment. Ceasing actions found to not be in the best long-term interest of relationships between trees and communities is integral to highlighting and celebrating those that are.

An example of a method from traditional cultures is looking back from the perspective of future generations to see which decisions are needed now to safeguard life. In the Aleut and Yup'ik cultures, this approach is referred to as “seventh-generation thinking” and is present across many biocultures and further referenced in the Practices Guide, Practice 13, Ancestral Wisdom, Elders, Youth & Future Generations of All Beings.

By emphasising these ethics in relation to Biocultural Knowledge, this framework seeks to strengthen and normalise individual and community relationships with lands and thus strengthen each individual's direct connection with Earth.

USING THE NEEDS OF TREES AS A GUIDE TO INHERENT RIGHTS

The Community Tree Stewardship Framework's first Ethical Principle is "Honouring Trees". The summary below illustrates how centring the needs of trees and their inherent rights to life supports our understanding of the needs of humanity and all beings of Nature.

1. Preservation of the tree's species and the gifts, benefits and niche in the web of life that that species serves. This is especially important for threatened species. Consideration of an individual tree's role in a landscape is given, and all appropriate authorities are consulted before any decision to remove a tree is taken [77].
2. Access to healthy waters, soils, nutrients minerals and air, including:
 - a. Biodiversity. Species-relevant mammals, birds, insects, mycelial networks and the appropriate composting of nutrients.
 - b. Climate. Regular weather patterns, toxin-free rain, soils and cycles of Nature that the species is adapted to.
 - c. Root systems. Access through the forest floor to other trees and other species they have evolved to live alongside.
3. Positive relationships with local communities and cultures who respect the individual tree and know and safeguard its needs, properties, medicines, fruits and spiritual gifts, including appropriate honourable harvesting, cultivation, grafting and propagation of young trees [78].
4. Freedom from excess heat, flooding, drought, ultraviolet radiation, nitrogen, heavy metals, overuse or deforestation, damaging biochemicals and harm, including avoiding the negative impacts of pesticides, geo-engineering, and genetically modified organisms, with particular reference to refraining from the genetic modification of tree species.
5. Freedom from neglect. Poor woodland management or loss of ongoing community relationships with forests means harm goes unaddressed. 'Climax ecosystem' communities include apex species of birds and mammals and communities living in harmonious balance with the land. Their absence can mean vital contributions such as seed propagation and distribution, organic soil nutrients, habitat creation, forest guardianship and Nature connection are lacking.



Appendix 5: Table of International Frameworks, Conventions & Declarations Cited in the Ethical Principles

Name	Created by	Notes	Date
Universal Declaration for the Rights of Mother Earth	World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth	Declaration agreed in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and referenced in the Ethical Principle on Ecosystem Integrity and the Rights of Nature and Mother Earth.	April 2010
The Trade and Sustainable Development Principles	International Institute for Sustainable Development	Particular references to the subsidiarity principle on page 23 and environmental integrity on page 21 (according to in-text pagination).	February 1994
Akwé: Kon Guidelines	Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity	Voluntary guidelines for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessments regarding developments proposed to take place on, or which are likely to impact, sacred sites and lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by Indigenous and local communities.	February 2004
The Tkarihwaí:ri: Code of Ethical Conduct to Ensure Respect for the Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Indigenous and Local Communities Relevant to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity	Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity Sister document to the Akwé: Kon Guidelines	Mohawk term meaning "the proper way" provided by the Elders of the Mohawk Community of Kahnawake. Recognises that respect for Traditional Knowledge requires that it is valued equally and complementary to scientific knowledge and that this equality is fundamental to promote full respect for the cultural and intellectual heritage of Indigenous and local communities relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.	October 2010
Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising out of Their Utilization	Secretariat for the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity	"Guidelines for the sharing of genetic resources and benefits derived from the use of a sovereign nations' resources for the development of products such as high-yielding varieties, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics."	April 2002
The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization	Secretariat for the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity	Protocols for access to cross-border sharing of genetic resources and benefits arising from them, including free, prior and informed consent in the context of genetic resources.	October 2010
Indigenous & Tribal Peoples Convention (1989)	International Labour Organisation	Highlighting the right to protect seeds, Article 19, and the freedom from release of any modified organisms, Article 20.	June 1989
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	United Nations General Assembly	Landmark recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, often abbreviated as UNDRIP.	September 2007
Free Prior and Informed Consent Summary from the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other normative standards	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner	Two-page summary of what Free, Prior and Informed Consent is, how it should be sought and mechanisms of redress. Includes links for further reading.	September 2013
Free, Prior and Informed Consent	United Nations Food & Agriculture Organisation	Detailed manual on Free, Prior and Informed Consent for project practitioners and managers.	2016 (publication date of manual)

Name	Created by	Notes	Date
UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas	United Nations Human Rights Council	Building on previous human rights bills and declarations. Important acknowledgements include rights to food sovereignty and inclusion in decision-making in food and agriculture to ensure ecologically sound and sustainable methods that respect cultures.	September 2018
Land and Human Rights: Standards and Applications	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner	Details land and human rights, including tenure rights exercised by Indigenous peoples and seasonal use of land by nomadic communities.	May 2015
Land Rights Standard	Rights & Resources Institute (RRI) in collaboration with the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) and Indigenous Peoples Major Group (IPMG)	Principles for recognising and respecting Indigenous Peoples', local communities', and Afro-Descendant Peoples' land and resource rights in climate, conservation and development actions and investment.	September 2021
Respecting Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Landscape Initiatives: A Guide for Practitioners on Minimum Safeguards and Evolving Best Practices	Proforest and Landesa	Resource for planners and implementers of landscape initiatives for NGOs and multi-stakeholder coalitions working with Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Three levels of practice. Highlighting innovative practice and top-down and bottom-up approaches.	March 2023
Standing Our Ground for the Land: An Indigenous Philanthropy	The Tapestry Institute	Best practices for funders of projects supporting Original Peoples and Nations. Focus on "Land-led".	September 2022
CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance	Global Indigenous Data Alliance	Four people- and purpose-oriented principles reflecting the crucial role of data in advancing Indigenous innovation and self-determination.	November 2018
Traditional Ecological and Biocultural Knowledge Labels & Notices	Local Contexts	Global initiative to support Indigenous communities with tools that can reassert cultural authority in heritage collections and data focusing on Indigenous cultural and intellectual property and Indigenous data sovereignty.	No publication date given
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner	A milestone document in the history of human rights, acknowledging fundamental human rights to freedom, equality and dignity to be universally protected.	December 1948
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner	"The ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights."	January 1976

Name	Created by	Notes	Date
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner	"Recognising the inherent dignity, equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."	March 1976
Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner	Focusing on the United Nations "Protect, Respect, Remedy" Framework with regards to corporations and human rights.	April 2011
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner	Summation of 30 years of work from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Fourteen articles focusing on women's equality and legal and civil rights.	September 1981
Guidance on the Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls	United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	General Recommendation No. 39. Decries the human rights violations and abuses directed at Indigenous women and girls. Calls for their effective and meaningful participation in decision-making.	October 2022
Charter for Change	Women's Climate Congress	Eleven Actions to secure a healthy climate aimed at government, business, non-government organisations, communities and individuals.	November 2022
FSC Remedy Framework	Forest Stewardship Council	Framework for remedying environmental and social harm.	July 2023

Appendix 6: Groups & Individuals from 1st of May, 2019, Oxford Event & Meetings

With gratitude for their time and expertise and all they continue to do to support trees and communities.

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Lulu Urquhart of Urquhart & Hunt
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Kenton Rogers of Treeconomics
Paul Schmidt of Verdant World
Catherine Barnard of the World Land Trust



Glossary of Terms

Afforestation: Restoring and recreating areas of woodlands and forests that may have existed long ago but were deforested. Re-afforestation: To distinguish between original forest cover and later regrowth of forests. Colloquially both are referred to as Reforestation.

Agroecology: Describes methods of farming that include study of ecological cycles. It can be used to describe many different farming methods though often is used to describe holistic or non-intensive agricultural practices on the assumption that the study of ecological cycles integrates principles of supporting ecosystem health and biodiversity.

Agroforestry: Collective name for a range of land use systems where agriculture incorporates the growing of trees.

Analog Forestry: Describes an approach to ecosystem restoration that includes awareness of the formation and function of forest systems to support a succession of tree species, a high biodiversity ratio and long-term tree health. Analog Forestry implies that forest ecosystem restoration mimics locationally relevant indigenous vegetation and considers the needs of local communities in planting economically beneficial cropping trees when the ecological needs of the land restoration have been established.

Ancestral Wisdom: A broad phrase used by Mindahi Bastida to describe the wisdom that Original Peoples and Nations walk with. The Western scientific understanding can lack depth regarding what this means, though it is understood that Ancestral Wisdom of Original Peoples and Nations needs to be respected. Mindahi Bastida of the Otomi-Toltec describes Ancestral Wisdom as the wisdom handed down from generations before that encodes how to care for territories and live aligned with Earth. Therefore, it includes the principles, stories, protocols, practices, and names and knowledge of beings, stories, manners, ceremonies, timings and cycles within a given Original Peoples or Nation in their care for the specific territories they have responsibility for (from sessions as part of the Listening Process; see appendix 1).

Assisted natural regeneration: Human protection and preservation of natural tree seedlings in forest-protected areas to create and improve forest productivity. It includes reducing and removing barriers to natural regeneration, including soil degradation and competition with weeds, grasses and other vegetation. New trees are planted where needed, and forests grow faster than they would naturally. Common in tropical forests.

Beings of Nature, all: Includes all flora, fauna, fungi and humans, alongside mountains, rivers, rocks, oceans and forests. This definition also acknowledges the beingness of systems of Nature subject to cycles, for example, the weather systems and water cycles. For a wider definition of Nature, see the glossary.

Beneficial relationships: Refers to beneficial relationships between human species and Nature. An example of a beneficial relationship is illustrated by stories from the Great Lakes of Canada of Skywoman creating a garden (weather patterns and healthy ecosystems) for the well-being of all [79].

Biocentric: Ethical life-centred viewpoint that considers all forms of life as having intrinsic value.

Biocultural: See definition for bioculture and for discussion of the use of the word biocultural in this document, see appendix 2

Biocultural Community Protocols: Articulated community-determined values, procedures and priorities. They set out rights and responsibilities under customary, state and international law as the basis for engaging with external actors such as governments, companies, academics and NGOs. They can be used as catalysts for constructive and proactive responses to threats and opportunities posed by land and resource development, conservation, research, and other legal and policy frameworks [80].

Biocultural (forest) ecosystem restoration: A way of talking about large-scale reforestation and forest and land restoration that honours the human relationship with forest ecosystems as an essential part of its living systems. Biocultural forest ecosystem restoration regards humans as Nature. It lifts the practices that are born of cultures that have, for generations, safeguarded biodiversity. This protection includes ongoing listening to and balancing of the needs of all the beings of a given territory. For specific practices that facilitate biocultural forest ecosystem restoration practices and which are aligned with Original Principles and Biocultural Community Protocols [81], see the Practices Guide.

Biocultural heritage: Biocultural heritage translates as the passing on of responsibility for the care of landscapes and territories from one generation to another. It is the responsibility of the current generation to take care of what is received from their ancestors in their lifetimes and pass it on to the next generations. It is not just the responsibility of a single current generation but of all generations to play their part. Biocultural heritage describes the process of listening and what is being learnt regarding the needs of territories and landscapes. Biocultural heritage is often location-specific and explains what that culture needs to do to maintain the health of an entire ecosystem [82].

Biocultural Knowledge: The knowledge is relational and contextual to all the beings of a bioculture and part of their living, breathing beingness. It is both epistemological and methodological. Biocultural Knowledge cannot be owned or discovered. It has agency and arises out of a place where it is safeguarded by those caring for it and can become knowledge that is cognisant. Those caring for Biocultural Knowledge are participating with the land and are responsible for observing the required protocols of care adaptively [83].

Biocultural restoration: The science and practice of restoring ecosystems and human and cultural relationships to a place. It strengthens and revitalises cultures alongside the lands with which they are inextricably linked. Encompassing biophysical and cultural elements of environmental well-being and resilience, biocultural restoration offers the missing bridge that connects restoration science with the practices of restoring justice to the land. One example is community gardens [84].

Bioculture: Bioculture describes a culture that arises from generations of humans who have been living in a territory and often includes practices of listening to all living beings as conscious and intelligent. Culture includes, but is not limited to, the language, protocols and crafts, and the daily, seasonal and decision-making practices of a community. What is passed on through the bioculture are the protocols and practices: what has been learnt as essential for maintaining life in the territory of the bioculture. Therefore, the culture is inextricably linked with the land and considered part of the mindscape of the territory itself. It could be conflated with a biocentric worldview, though this doesn't highlight the importance and diversity of living biocultures, associated languages, practices and protocols. See appendix 2 for use of the word biocultural in this document.

Biodiversity: The variety of plant and animal life in the world or a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable. Biodiversity as a word and concept originated in the field of conservation biology. However, "while proof of conservation success is ultimately biological, conservation itself is a social and political process, not a biological process. Therefore, an assessment of conservation requires an assessment of social and political institutions that contribute to, or threaten, conservation" [85]. The world's Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous systems, which include sacred areas, no-hunting areas and reserve forests, are major social systems that benefit biodiversity.

Child: A child is conventionally defined as any person under 18 years of age. The International Labour Organisation sets out Minimum Age Requirements of 15 years of age (13 years of age for light work) under specific conditions and sets the minimum age for hazardous work at 18 years old. This allows the possibility of people under 18 years of age in certain countries to support their families and participate in the restoration of their landscape. If the law of the country of residence of the child is more restrictive than the ILO guidance, this law would override the minimum-age guidance [86].

Colonial thinking: Colonialism describes the settlement and political domination of areas beyond the colonising state or group's home territory often by way of violent dispossession of existing inhabitants, and notably including in modern times European colonial projects affecting the lands known as the Americas, Australia, and parts of Africa and Asia. Imperialism occurs when a nation state administers a foreign territory as an empire, without necessarily involving significant colonial settlement [87]. Racial oppression can lead to a "colonised mentality" involving internalised perception of ethnic and cultural inferiority [88]. Drawing from these definitions, 'colonial thinking' refers to the assumption that it is appropriate to dominate another land, culture or individual by controlling or extracting resources or by a set of ideas and administrative practices affecting control over the physical and digital realm. For examples of discourse on decolonisation, see references [89]. Also see definition of land-grabbing.

Conscious: To be awake, aware and responsive to what is going on in one's surroundings.

Consciousness: The state of being awake, aware and responsive to what is going on in one's surroundings.

Conservation: The use of conservation in this document refers to the conservation movement and practical implementation of conservation biology to address the loss of Earth's biological diversity. Conservation biology is at a population level, whereas restoration ecology is at a community level in the ecosystem – protecting the environment and inhabitants through careful management. Preserving cultural heritage for the future and community-based conservation biology is part of participatory conservation and management [90].

Conservation Biology: Conservation biology is the study of the conservation of Nature and Earth's biodiversity with the aim of protecting species, habitats and ecosystems from excessive rates of extinction and the erosion of biotic interactions [91].

Data sovereignty: The concept that data, and the protection and management of the data, belongs to the nation or individual in which the data originates. Therefore, the data should be stored and processed in accordance with the laws of that nation even if the data is collected and processed by an individual, group, or organisation in another country with different laws. Increasingly relevant with the rise of cloud computing (linked to Indigenous Data Sovereignty).

Decolonisation: Colonisers leaving lands that have been colonised. Also can refer to the decolonisation of systems, governance, cultures and personal relationships from domination and control impacts. For further reading, see endnote [92] and [94]. Also see definition of land-grabbing.

Decolonising conservation: "Engaging in decolonial conservation requires a radical shift in focus of conservation efforts towards the myriad of vibrant forms of engaging with and knowing the world around us that have been developed by a multiplicity of peoples and cultures around the globe that have, sadly, been much too often overlooked by Western-centric models of conservation and knowledge" [93]. A decolonial model of environmental and conservation management "recognizes and supports resurgent Indigenous-led and community-led conservation" [94]. For a recommended reading list on decolonising conservation, please refer to the endnotes referenced in this definition [95] with introduction and translations into French and Spanish [96].

Deep listening: Deep listening is listening deeply with the intent to hear another's lived reality. This listening can include open-ended questions, empathically feeling the full ramifications of someone's described experience – without making assumptions that what you are feeling is the same – and using summaries of what has been shared to find out more and listen deeper. Deep listening, as a reflective practice, can include checking to find out if the person is confident that you have, to the best of your ability, understood what has been communicated. In the Listening Process (see appendix 1), concepts that had been brought forwards were reflected on after the session and supplementary research was completed where needed. Then the research and interpretation of the concept was then brought back into the next session to evolve a shared and agreed understanding. Other examples of deep listening include radical listening [97] and restorative justice practices [98].

Earth jurisprudence: Alignment of Indigenous legal traditions, rights of Nature, and a systems-view of law. The term "Earth jurisprudence" was proposed by Thomas Berry to describe the transition from a relationship of exploitation of the planet to a respectful human–Earth relationship in which the inherent value and rights of each member of the Earth community are experienced, recognised and respected [99].

Ecocentric: Denotes system-centred or Earth-centred system of values as distinct from a human-centred (anthropocentric) or life-centred (biocentric) system of values. Some debate exists regarding the appropriateness of humans claiming an eco-centred position when their perspective is as a human and therefore their lens is anthropocentric. To clarify, in the context of this document, ecocentric is used to articulate humans bringing the needs of Earth and all beings of Nature into the centre of decision-making and thereby aligning human systems to meet the wider needs of all beings of Nature and the Earth.

Ecological economics: Addresses the interdependence and coevolution of human economies and Earth's ecosystems. Ecological economics treats the human economy as a subset of Earth's larger ecosystem and explores methods of deliberately aligning financial systems to Nature and natural limits. It is not the same as environmental economics, which is the mainstream economic analysis of the environment. Ecological economics is broad and interdisciplinary, touching on movements and theories including good living, degrowth and sacred economic theories, and circular and doughnut economies.

Ecological restoration: The process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.

Ecologically and culturally significant trees: Defined by the biological significance of the tree as an established network hub for multiple trees in a landscape [31], their ecological roles, especially in water and climate systems [32] and biocultural roles in ancestral wisdom, medicine, food, heat and construction; and their conservation needs in terms of survival of specific native species [33]. Being aware of the maintenance of sacred trees with the understanding of their roles in supporting the land, community and all beings of Nature is important for the stability of ecosystems and does not detract from the ecological and cultural significance of all tree species indigenous to the biozone. See Ethical Principle Honouring Trees.

Equality: Refers to being equal in rights, opportunities and status.

Ethical: A moral principle, in the context of this framework, that relates to avoiding activities that harm people or the environment. Drawing on a "set of concepts and principles that guide us in determining what behaviour helps or harms sentient creatures" [100]. This framework's Ethical Principles include all beings of Nature, and the Earth itself, as having sentience, intelligence and inherent rights and include respect for those inherent rights in the definition of ethical.

Food sovereignty: The inherent and enshrined right to define and determine food and agriculture systems, including healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods that respect human rights [101]. This concept also includes the right to participate in decision-making regarding agricultural policy as articulated in Article 15 of the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.

Forest and land restoration: As part of the listening process, WeForest brought forward the suggestion that forest and landscape restoration was a better descriptor than reforestation for the efforts of small to medium organisations facilitating tree planting. This is because there has been a shift in the lifetime of this document towards integrating a more holistic restoration approach [102]. Out of respect for the definition of land that has evolved from the Listening Process, this document adapts WeForest's suggested wording to forest and land restoration to encompass a biocultural understanding of land. Forest and land restoration is ecological restoration specifically applied to forest and land where the ecosystem has been degraded, damaged or destroyed.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC): The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) recognises the specific rights of Indigenous Peoples, which align with their universal liberties to self-determination. FPIC allows Indigenous Peoples to provide or withhold/withdraw consent at any point regarding projects impacting their territories. FPIC enables Indigenous Peoples to negotiate to shape project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation [103]. FPIC is regarded as a very basic protection, often maintaining colonial power imbalances and being open to coercion.

Fortress conservation: A conservation model based on the belief that biodiversity protection is best achieved by creating protected areas where ecosystems can function in isolation from human disturbance. Fortress, or protectionist, conservation has problematic colonial roots and often assumes that local people use natural resources in irrational and destructive ways and, as a result, cause biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. Protected areas following the fortress model can be characterised by three principles: local people dependent on the natural resource base are excluded; enforcement is implemented by park rangers patrolling the boundaries, using a “fines and fences” approach to ensure compliance; and only tourism, safari hunting, and scientific research are considered appropriate uses within protected areas [104].

Good living: Also expressed as “good life”. Both are translations of the South American idea and movement *buen vivir*. *Buen vivir* emphasises harmony with Nature and diverse biocultural coexistence and rejects Western development models of economics, instead valuing community togetherness and quality of life. A similar word that has no direct word-for-word translation in English is the Zulu word *Ubuntu*, which can be translated as “humanity” or “I am because you are”.

Greenwashing: When an organisation or sector purposely disseminates misleading or deceptive publicity to present an environmentally responsible public image.

Indigenous data sovereignty: The ability for Indigenous Peoples, communities and Nations to participate, steward and control data that is created with or about themselves. Sovereignty refers to the fact that Indigenous Nations are sovereign in their governance and are the ultimate authority in their data and knowledge. It aims to redefine Indigenous Peoples' relationship to research from being participants or subjects to being meaningful partners and co-researchers [105]. Data collected from a People or Nation is their living culture and is subject to the laws of the Nation from which it is collected [106].

Indigenous science: Dawn Hill Adams describes Indigenous science [107] by drawing on the definition of “Native science” offered by Gregory Cajete. “Native science is a metaphor for a wide range of tribal processes of perceiving, thinking, acting, and ‘coming to know’ that have evolved through human experience with the natural world. Native science is born of a lived and storied participation with the natural landscape. To gain a sense of Native science one must participate with the natural world. To understand the foundations of Native science one must become open to the roles of sensation, perception, imagination, emotion, symbols, and spirit as well as that of concept, logic, and rational empiricism” [108].

Inherent rights: Those rights which are considered to be inherited at birth by virtue of being in existence and cannot be taken away from the rights holder. Examples include the Anishinaabe people, for whom inherent rights mean “the authority given to Anishinaabe people by the creator for self-determination including the right to govern themselves and a right that exists by reason of an individual's status as an individual and is not derived from any other source” [109]. Inherent rights can also be used to describe natural rights that are not dependent on legal systems, laws or cultural practices. They describe beings as sovereign and their natural rights as being universal, fundamental and inalienable. Natural law, which is a system of law, ethics and philosophy that says humans possess intrinsic values that govern their reasoning and behaviour, describes these rights as those that can only be limited by violating someone else's inherent rights. Natural law maintains these values are inherent in people and not created by society or court judges. The Grandmothers of the Putumayo region, Columbia, as represented by ASOMI (Asociación de Mujeres Indígenas de la Medicina Tradicional “La Chagra de la Vida”) during the Listening Process, speak of inherent rights as the “right to life”.

Integrated landscape approach: "A framework to integrate policy and practise for multiple land-uses, within a given area, to ensure equitable and sustainable use of land while strengthening measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change" [110]. Landscape approaches are geographically embedded and therefore influenced by local histories and context-specific conditions in landscapes. Vermunt et al. go on to identify that "key processes and features include establishing clear and shared objectives, developing good and adaptive governance, engaging stakeholders, continued learning and support, and sound evaluation of progress" [111]. This phrase has been used to 'greenwash' projects which ignore or override local cultures and livelihoods to create large-scale conservation areas therefore it is used in this document as a guide to practices of integrating policy and multiple land uses cautiously within the larger context of the practices addressed in the Practices Guide.

Intelligence: Describes the state of possessing language, a sense of I and not I, and the capacity to dream [112].

Intelligent: Possessing language, a sense of I and not I, and the capacity to dream [112].

Knowledge: Facts, information and skills acquired through experience or education. The theoretical, practical or cultural understanding of a subject or practical skill set. In the context of the Community Tree Stewardship Framework, Mindahi Bastida shared three layers of what is contained in the text: the words and information, their meaning which is expressing knowledge, and the wisdom upon which the knowledge is based.

Land: According to the International Labour Organisation, the "use of the term lands shall include the concept of territories, which covers the total environment of the areas which the peoples concerned occupy or otherwise use" [113]. These documents adopt the definition given by Dawn Hill Adams: "Many Indigenous people of North America refer to the natural world by using the term *the Land*. This term actually includes everything Western people typically mean when they say 'natural world,' but 'the Land' is conceptually broader and deeper" [114].

Land grabbing: The action of taking advantage of various circumstances to seize control of land that is already occupied. It can be applied to many historical actions of colonisation, imperialism and policy reforms, such as the redistribution of common land through the Enclosure Act in the UK or the redistribution of lands in Australasia and Northern America. Since 2008, it has gained notoriety due to large-scale land acquisitions, mainly by private investors, but also by public investors and agribusinesses that buy farmland or lease it on a long-term basis to produce food, biofuel and industrial commodities [115] (also see Africa [116], Asia [117]). These grabs are often dubbed "neo-colonial". Other examples include mining operations for precious metals and minerals, hydroelectric dams, conservation efforts leading to fortress conservation or exclusion from national parks (dubbed "green colonialism" or "green land grabbing") and the buying up of forests by corporations for carbon credits (dubbed "carbon colonialism") [118]. These actions have impacts on carbon sequestration [119], human rights [120] and land tenure [121].

Land-led: "The natural world itself sets the agenda for Indigenous-led environmental projects because our epistemic system is Land-based" [122], which explains that the needs and voices of all the beings of Nature within a territory show what is needed within environmental projects. Land-led as referenced in the Practices Guide describes design and management of projects where time and presence are given in the process for deep listening with the beings of Nature within the territory, both human and non-human, and solutions arise from that listening. Also see definitions of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Biocultural Knowledge.

Landscape initiatives: Landscape initiatives provide an avenue for bringing together government, local communities, producers, civil society, and supply chain companies to collaborate on delivering positive environmental and social outcomes at scale [123]. They can also be seen as nature-based solutions, jurisdictional-level initiatives in connection with supply chains, and tropical forest landscape initiatives [124].

Landscapes, personhood of: This phrase was brought forward by Mindahi Bastida of the Otomi-Toltec during the Listening Process to assist with relating to Biocultural Knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge and the Mindscape of a Territory. The personhood of landscapes can also be described as the overarching consciousness of lands or waters that one can come to know and feel. Environmental personhood has been recognised in law in New Zealand, Bolivia and Ecuador [125] and is an iteration of the enactment of legal rights of Nature and landscape planning tools.

Mindscape of a territory: The definition of Place-Thought expresses what Mindahi Bastida brought forward with the phrase mindscape. Vanessa Watts described Place-Thought [126] as the “non-distinctive space where place and thought were never separated because they never could or can be separated. Place-Thought is based upon the premise that land is alive and thinking, and humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts. . . [This] necessarily disrupts a concept of knowledge separate from the geosphere and biosphere and posits instead that land and thought are integral to one another. Biota, geology and thinking are one and the same” [126].

Mother Earth or Earth Mother: The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth defines Mother Earth as “the source of life, nourishment and learning and provides everything we need to live well” [127]. Article 1 states the following in terms of inherent rights: “Mother Earth is a living being, where ‘being’ includes ecosystems, natural communities, species and all other natural entities which exist as part of Mother Earth.” Mother Earth consciousness is innate to all natural life on Earth and interconnected through Nature’s intelligent living systems.

Mother Earth, Rights of: The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth defines those rights as the following: “Mother Earth is a unique, indivisible, self-regulating community of interrelated beings that sustains, contains and reproduces all beings. Each being is defined by its relationships as an integral part of Mother Earth. The inherent rights of Mother Earth are inalienable in that they arise from the same source as existence. Mother Earth and all beings are entitled to all the inherent rights recognised in [the] Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as may be made between organic and inorganic beings, species, origin, use to human beings, or any other status. Just as human beings have human rights, all other beings also have rights which are specific to their species or kind and appropriate for their role and function within the communities in which they exist. The rights of each being are limited by the rights of other beings, and any conflict between their rights must be resolved in a way that maintains the integrity, balance and health of Mother Earth” [127].

Natural regeneration: The process by which woodlands are restocked by trees that develop from seeds, which fall and germinate.

Nature: Everything in the natural, material, physical world or universe (plants, animals, mountains, oceans, stars, etc.). This definition includes humans and the physical elements in forms that have been crafted by humans. Nature is recognised here as pertaining to all matter in physical form in the awareness that matter and Nature are frequency based. Nature is also credited with conscious intelligence of the interrelated whole and indistinguishable from Mother Earth. Indigenous Peoples view both themselves and Nature as part of an extended family with shared ancestry and origins. There is a distinction between this interpretation of Nature and the anthropocentric conceptualization that views Nature in economic terms and as a service provider. This document capitalises references to Nature out of respect for Nature and in line with pre-Industrial Revolution English language and the UN Harmony with Nature program.

Original Peoples and Nations: Refers to what is more often known as Indigenous Peoples and Nations. It includes acknowledgement both of the community or people living in a place and of the many Nations living inside and across currently recognised geopolitical boundaries. This way of describing First Nations and Indigenous Peoples and Nations has been used at the request of Mindahi Bastida as a representative of the Mother Earth Delegation of United Original Nations and of the Council of the Eagle and Condor. It is acknowledged that this phrase is not universally used by representatives of Indigenous Peoples or communities living in close connection with lands. It is also recognised that requests to honour self-determination in the choice of how Indigenous Peoples and Nations are referred to in international texts has not led to changes. Therefore, it is with the deepest respect for all Peoples and local communities, including those attempting to create texts that are understandable for a wide range of audiences, that this document honours this advice to use the phrase Original Peoples and Nations. This phrase is often used in conjunction with "and local communities" to reflect regional variation. Both The Fountain and TreeSisters are on a journey of listening towards finding agreed and shared language with wider audiences.

Original Principles and protocols: Over the course of two years, Mindahi Bastida and representatives from The Fountain and TreeSisters worked together to develop a mutual understanding of the significance of Original Principles and protocols. This understanding was achieved through numerous listening sessions. They also used specific examples from various biocultures, given by individuals who represented the Mother Earth Delegation of the United Original Nations. Original Principles or protocols refer to the instructions provided by Earth/Land/Nature within a specific territory on how to nurture the collective community of all living beings in that area. This involves preserving interconnections, harmony, and balance for the benefit of everyone within the larger whole. Original Principles are encoded in Biocultural Knowledge and passed on meaningfully through Ancestral Wisdom, language and practices. They are also refreshed and adjusted in real time by living guardians in their ongoing relationship with the Land, often through ceremony. A community coordinator might also receive guidance through dreams or ceremony, accessing the *mindscape of a territory* that upholds the protocols to support the continuous nurturing of a particular task. Original Principles and protocols are the origins of Biocultural Community Protocols now recognised as essential when working with Original Peoples and Nations' representatives in a territory. Original Principles are deeper, often orally transmitted and held as more privately sacred than the Biocultural Community Protocols that can be communicated on paper and in law.

Place-based governance systems and approaches: "Place-based governance systems provide an avenue to simultaneously address biodiversity loss and social injustices. Around the world, place-based governance systems and practices have supported the coexistence of people and their environments, often for millennia, before being displaced by colonial peoples and systems" [128]. Place-based approaches strengthen local community biocultural restoration. The Community Tree Stewardship Framework is designed to identify and facilitate place-based funding in support of the care of trees, communities and biocultures.

Protocols: See *Original Principles and protocols* and *Biocultural Community Protocols*.

Reforestation: Natural or intentional restocking of existing forests and woodlands that have been depleted through deforestation and clear-cutting. Often used as a catch-all term to describe afforestation, re-afforestation, forest and land restoration and all forms of tree planting based on the assumption that much of the Earth was covered with trees at one point or another. Reforestation can prevent diverse vegetation and compete with other land uses, and it is better to avoid deforestation in the first place. Some organisations and communities now intentionally refrain from using the word "reforestation" to focus on regeneration efforts under the name of "forest and land restoration".

Restoration: Restoring something to its original state. Can include cultural and/or ecological restoration. Regenerating and restoring degraded, damaged or destroyed ecosystems and habitats by human action. Also see forest and land restoration and biocultural restoration definitions.

Rights-based conservation: Describes the recent advances in conservation approaches from efforts that have excluded local peoples from landscapes towards recognition that conserving ecosystems must support land tenure and community and human rights [129]. Alongside this recognition is the mounting evidence that biodiversity and forest management are better managed when local peoples' and women's rights, land tenure [130] and human rights are upheld [131]. Subtle variations in emphasis are encompassed by human rights-based conservation [132]. Critiques highlight the challenges of addressing community rights from a human rights-based perspective in light of historical issues [133].

Territories: An alternative approach to describing landscapes aiming to recognise the inherent personhood of landscapes and the Biocultural Knowledge ingrained within the "territorial mindscape" or "place-thought" as defined in the glossary. As a result, the concept of territories expands beyond the conventional Western interpretation of marking out land on a map and allocating land tenure.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Traditional Ecological Knowledge is place dependent due to the intimate connection between biocultural and linguistic diversity and that specific territory [134]. The term Traditional Ecological Knowledge highlights the historical nature of ecological restoration as a discipline rooted in Traditional Ecological Knowledge and the relatively recent assumptions that ecological restoration sits within biological sciences, distinct from the cultural work of anthropology, in listening for Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

Tree growing: A catch-all phrase encompassing a comprehensive range of activities, including reforestation, afforestation, ecological, forest and land restoration, tending to saplings in nurseries, conserving existing forests, and caring for trees across various landscapes. Initially, "tree planting" was employed before the collaborating NGOs refining this document recognised the limited scope of "planting" in terms of the life of trees and opted for "tree growing" to encompass the continuous cycle of nurturing, planting, and maintaining a tree throughout its lifespan.

Self-determination: Denotes the right of people to decide their own destiny.

Socially and ecologically beneficial forms of tree growing: Trees inherently offer social and ecological advantages within their naturally adapted landscapes. Therefore, socially and ecologically beneficial methods of tree growing involve practices that uphold the well-being of trees that evolved to thrive within a specific ecosystem or their relationship with human and non-human needs. Examples of the needs of trees can be found in the introductory section of the main text.

Subsidiarity principle: Outlined in the Trade and Sustainable Development Principles by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (1994), the principle assigns precedence for action to the lowest jurisdictional level that maintains effectiveness. This standard acknowledges that local governance can often be more impactful than policies crafted on an international scale [135].

Systems that drive ecological destruction: Systems refers both to human constructed international systems such as finance, law, education, governance, religion and health and also to specific technological and organisational systems such as a software platform, hardware devices, transportation and product supply chains. Systems that drive ecological destruction are those that are not inherently designed to care for life and that drive negative behaviours such as addiction, greed and the overconsumption of resources.

Western science: In the context of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services conceptual framework, the term "modern science", also known as "Western scientific knowledge" or "international science", is used to encompass the knowledge commonly produced in universities, research institutions and private companies. This knowledge is developed using paradigms and methods closely associated with the scientific method that was established in post-Renaissance Europe but has roots in earlier periods as well. This knowledge is usually shared through scientific journals and scholarly books. Modern science's key aspects include observer independence, the ability to replicate findings, a systematic approach of scepticism, and transparent research methodologies that employ standardised units and categories [136].

Wisdom(s): Possessing the capacity to think and act by employing knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense, and insight. Within the Community Tree Stewardship Framework, wisdom is also portrayed in its plural form, signifying the diverse array of accumulated wisdom stemming from various cultures, communities, and nations. Wisdom is interconnected with knowledge, representing a more profound level of naturally integrating knowledge into practical actions. Thus, even when knowledge is put down in writing, wisdom remains in its real-world application.





ENDNOTES & REFERENCES

- [1] Throughout these documents, Nature as a word is capitalised at the suggestion of Myra Jackson as a representative of the UN Harmony with Nature Program and conversant with all UN Harmony with Nature official texts as approved by the UN General Assembly. This is out of respect for Nature and also in light of the original capitalisation of Nature in the English language before the Industrial Revolution and its capitalisation in other languages such as German.
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THANK YOU

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