



Ethics of Permaculture Design

Ethics: "moral principles, rules of conduct" Collins English Dictionary

A foundation for design.

A basic agreement or code of conduct.

Earth care

An environmental ethic; care for the living and non-living environment.

"...creation is a thing of beauty and complexity beyond our understanding, and...it is ours to treasure and pass on, not simply to exploit and exhaust." Graham Bell, *The Permaculture Way*.

People care

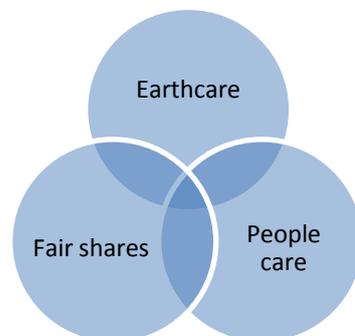
A social ethic relating to meeting the needs and rights of all the earth's peoples.

"...establishing sustainable human habitats. This can mean anything from teaching ourselves communication skills, to designing cities which cater for real human needs." Patrick Whitefield, *Permaculture In A Nutshell*.

Fair shares

A personal ethic; taking responsibility for meeting our needs and sharing our surpluses.

"War is derived from causes which are also the causes of almost all the evils in states, private as well as public...namely, when the people exceed the limit of necessity, and give themselves up to the unlimited accumulation of wealth." Plato, *Republic*.



The prime directive of Permaculture The only ethical decision is to take responsibility for our own existence and that of our children.

Sustainability

"The ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

World commission on environment and development, our common future 1987

"Meeting our needs now, whilst improving the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

It's like playing a game

"I find that most people are comfortable with the idea of 'ground rules' or 'rules of the game'. By explaining permaculture as a 'game', people can make up their own mind about whether they become 'players' or not. I think that it's counter-productive to try to require people to behave ethically, no matter what the situation that they find themselves in. But to ask for a certain approach if people are involved in permaculture, then that's fine. We can't force people to play the game, but we can be clear about what the game is, and how we play it. The choice to participate remains with the individual." Angus Soutar

This handout was developed by Brighton Permaculture Trust for the Introduction to Permaculture Course, September 2011.