

The Dream

Jeanne and Dick Roy

Jeanne Roy, a recognized leader in the Northwest environmental movement since 1970, is co-founder and Co-Director of the Center for Earth Leadership in Portland, Oregon. She is also co-founder of the Northwest Earth Institute, the Oregon Natural Step Network, Recycling Advocates, and Portland's Master Recycler program. She served on the founding board of The Natural Step U.S. at the invitation of Paul Hawken, authored a weekly column on sustainable lifestyle in *The Oregonian* and *This Week Magazine* for five years, and serves as a continual advisor to public agencies on environmental policy matters.

Dick Roy is co-founder and Co-Director of the Center for Earth Leadership in Portland, Oregon. Since 1993 he has worked full-time with his wife Jeanne in founding and managing the Center, the Northwest Earth Institute and the Oregon Natural Step Network. At the national level, Dick served for six years on the board of the Center for a New American Dream in Washington, DC. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Dick is the creator of Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future and a leader in the American movement to engage the legal profession in sustainability at a more profound level.



Rebounding from a year of hard work in organizing Earth Day Oregon 1990, a small group of Oregonians traveled north to Seattle in November 1990 for the Earth & Spirit Conference. Inspired by *The Dream of the Earth*, and conceived by Fritz and Vivienne Hull, this conference attracted 1200 participants. Many—like we—were drawn intuitively to the conference title with absolutely no appreciation of its potential impact.

Upon our return to Portland, recognizing the immensity of the Seattle experience, we invited all 22 Oregonians to our home for an evening meeting to consider two questions. *What was the depth of personal impact of the conference? How might we make the Seattle conference a point of energy to advance our work for the Earth in Oregon?*

At the conclusion of the evening meeting, the group had formulated three initiatives. The two of us agreed to form the “deepening committee.” Its mission would be to find ways for Oregonians to explore the thoughts of Thomas Berry and other authors aligned with *Dream*.

To consider more deeply how this might be done, in 1991 we spent four months at the Oregon coast and hatched a plan. Dick would quit work as a lawyer so we could work together as full-time volunteers; we would form a new nonprofit, the Northwest Earth Institute; and our initial strategy would be to develop a discussion course on Earth ethics to be taken by groups of eight to 12 to explore ideas aligned with *The Dream*.

Over the past 15 years, we have pursued our personal vision as co-founders of the Northwest Earth Institute, the Oregon Natural Step Network, and the Center for Earth Leadership, always with *The Dream* in mind. In fact, in our current work as co-directors of the Center, we have a saying, “All roads lead to Thomas Berry.” By this we mean that lesser roads, in pursuit of a sustainable future, all seem to have dead ends.

This fall we organized four diverse *Great Work* reading groups, including one with two Oregon State legislators about to begin the 2009 session in Salem. By now there is no disagreement with Berry's basic observation that we live in the terminal phase of the Cenezoic Era, the four great establishments promote a radical discontinuity between the human and natural world, and we must establish an integral relationship with the Earth. More difficult to grasp is that our current culture cannot provide the path to achieve the goal.

Wrestling with how city dwellers might establish an integral relationship with the Earth, in the darkness of early fall morning at the bus stop recently, Dick picked up a fallen maple leaf. The design of the stem, the main veins, and offshoots, were an intricate expression of both structural needs of this species and embodied energy from the sun. In the Petroleum Interval, we know we are wasting the ancient sunlight embodied in con-

centrated hydrocarbon energy as we chase the illusive technological fix. Yet this loss is not deeply felt.

Having worked with thousands of people in small groups over the past 15 years, we know the depth of their conscious concern. We also realize the difficulty that we all experience in responding to threats that are sensually remote in time and space, even as we do the personal work required to embrace the immensity of the predicament we have created.

In considering the work of Thomas Berry, he has provided a candid view of the predicament, a path to a truly sustainable future, and a sense of how we might accomplish the Great Work. Because authentic hope cannot be based on denial, his contribution to the current struggle is invaluable. He has provided hope of the possible, without sugarcoating the predicament we face.

In a very personal sense, Berry has provided the inspiration for our life's journey and a framework to guide our professional work and personal decision-making. He could do no more. For this we are deeply grateful.