

Identifying the Synergies & Shared Ethics between CES/LETS and other Movements - A Focus on Permaculture

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Today we take a look at identifying the Synergies and Shared Ethics between the CES/LETS movement and others with a focus on Permaculture.



synergy
noun

plural
noun: synergies

the interaction or cooperation of two or more organisations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.

eg. "the synergy between artist and record company"

So what is a synergy and how do we identify them?

Synergy - the interaction or cooperation of two or more organisations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.

When we look at these logos what do we see? We see examples of groups aligned with the CES/LETS movement. We contemplate synergies that exist between them and also the importance of branding that allows others to identify synergies between their groups and yours.

If your group does not have a logo this would suggest that you do not take your group seriously. How does one expect an exchange to be identified if there is no obvious identifier? If you can not identify yourself then how are others able to find synergies with your group if they do not know who you are. A logo is the most basic mechanism available to you in order to market and brand your exchange. If you belong to a group with no logo then I would encourage you to go back to your group and identify why not.

CES / LETs vs Others?

Hands up if you are familiar with any of the organisations on the right. Leave your hand up if you are or have been a member of one of the organisations on the right. Thank you. Now looking at all of these organisations what do they have in common? They either buy, sell, trade, barter, swap, gift or share. Some of the groups on the left do all of these things as they are possible modes of trade available to us through the Community Exchange System.

We can see in this small group of organisations examples of how we can identify synergies between ourselves and other movements. For example Couchsurfing and AirBNB offer accommodation as do CES/LETS exchanges. Ripe Near Me provides a platform for back yard growers to sell or swap their excess produce with others in their community. Look to the core purpose of the other movements, their values, their ethics, their ethos and the commonalities with your group. The more the similarities the stronger the likelihood that your groups will be highly compatible.

When we look at other groups who appear to do be doing similar things to us there is a tendency to react negatively to this incursion into our space. Knowingly or not we drive a wedge between ourselves and others and take on an “us and them” mentality. A classic example of this occurred when Timebanking came on the radar in Australia. There was overwhelming scepticism and unease in the LETS community about the Timebanking concept as it was perceived to be a threat to LETS. As time has passed LETS members are starting to see the benefits

of Timebanks operating in our communities.

Synergy Approach and Integration

What does it look like?

- A synergistic organisation achieves more as a group than its parts could in isolation.
- Increasing synergy requires careful analysis of your organisation's current strategies to identify better ways of operating.



- Complementary Skills
 - ✓ identify the key skills of each person and find ways to connect your people so that the skills and insights of each person complement and support the others
- Increase Communication
 - ✓ identify and eliminate communication blockages to increase synergy by developing coordination
- Efficient Performance
 - ✓ streamline your Administration allowing each person to focus on maximum efficiency within his/her role
- Sharing Best Practices
 - ✓ share successful strategies within your group
- Alliances
 - ✓ create synergistic alliances with other groups that have resources or strategies that sync well with yours

A synergistic organisation achieves more as a group than its parts could in isolation. Increasing synergy requires careful analysis of your groups current strategies to identify better ways of operating.

So what are some of the ways we can do that?

*We can identify the key skills of each person to find ways to connect your people so that the skills and insights of each person complement and support the others

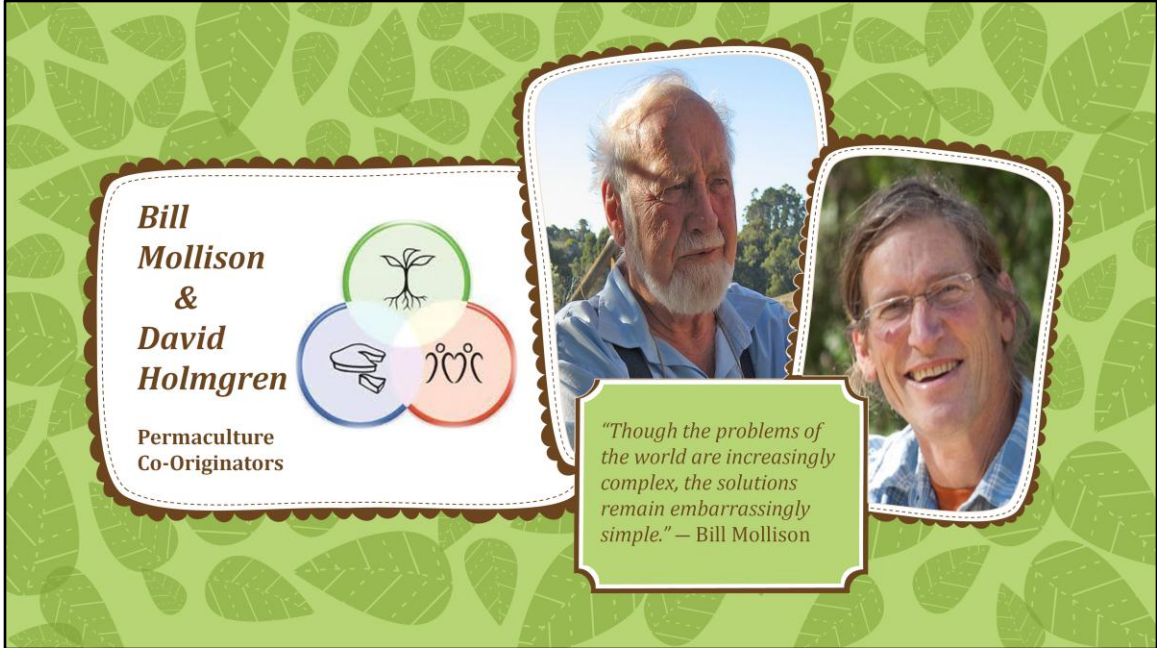
*We can identify and eliminate communication blockages to increase synergy by developing coordination

*streamline your Administration allowing each person to focus on maximum efficiency within his/her role

*share successful strategies within your group and


*create synergistic alliances with other groups that have resources or strategies that sync well with yours

If we apply this approach firstly to our own group we can then understand how to apply it to other movements such as Permaculture.




The Permaculture concept was conceived and developed in my home state of Tasmania in the early 1970s by co-originsators Bill Mollison & David Holmgren. Since then it has spread around the world to more than 160 countries and is arguably one of Tasmania's finest exports.


PERMACULTURALIST




WHAT MY FRIENDS
THINK I DO




WHAT SOCIETY
THINKS I DO




WHAT I
THINK I DO



WHAT MY NEIGHBOURS
THINK I DO



WHAT A MICROBE
THINKS I DO



WHAT I REALLY DO

PERMACULTURE MEMES

Permaculture originally referred to "permanent agriculture" but was expanded to stand also for "permanent culture" as it was seen that social aspects were integral to a truly sustainable system.

"What permaculturists are doing is the most important activity that any group is doing on the planet. We don't know what details of a truly sustainable future are going to be like, but we need options, we need people experimenting in all kinds of ways and permaculturists are one of the critical gangs that are doing that."

- Dr. David Suzuki, geneticist, broadcaster and international environmental advocate

So what is Permaculture?

I have heard Permaculture defined as gardening for anarchists or as messy gardening for hippies.

Permaculture originally referred to "permanent agriculture" but was expanded to stand also for "permanent culture" as it was seen that social aspects were integral to a truly sustainable system.

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What is Permaculture?

“Permaculture draws together the diverse ideas, skills and ways of living which need to be rediscovered and developed in order to empower us to move from being dependant consumers to becoming more responsible and productive citizens.”

—David Holmgren

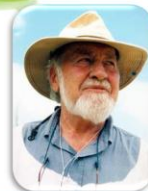
<https://holmgren.com.au/>



“Permaculture is a philosophy of working with, rather than against nature; of protracted and thoughtful observation rather than protracted and thoughtless action; of looking at systems in all their functions rather than asking only one yield of them and of allowing systems to demonstrate their own evolutions.”

—Bill Mollison

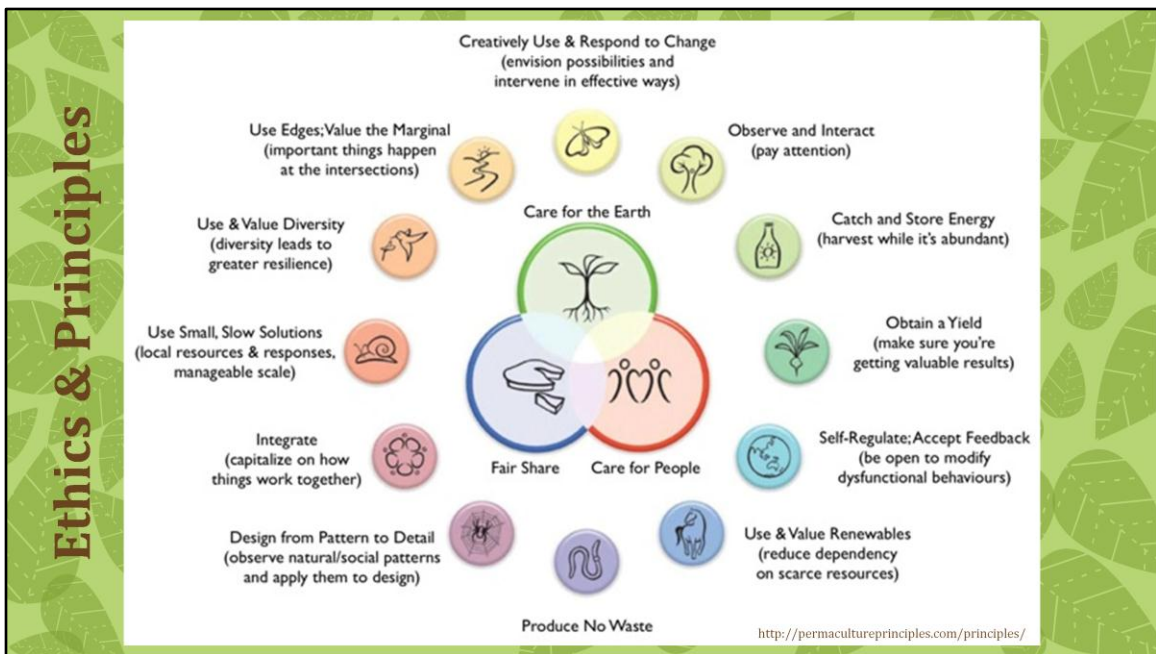
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David Holmgren tells us that “Permaculture draws together the diverse ideas, skills and ways of living which need to be rediscovered and developed in order to empower us to move from being dependant consumers to becoming more responsible and productive citizens.”

While Bill Mollison tells us that “Permaculture is a philosophy of working with, rather than against nature; of protracted and thoughtful observation rather than protracted and thoughtless action; of looking at systems in all their functions rather than asking only one yield of them and of allowing systems to demonstrate their own evolutions.”

A key feature of the concept is that the principles are firmly based in an ethical, ecological and social justice framework of: Earth Care, People Care & Fair Share



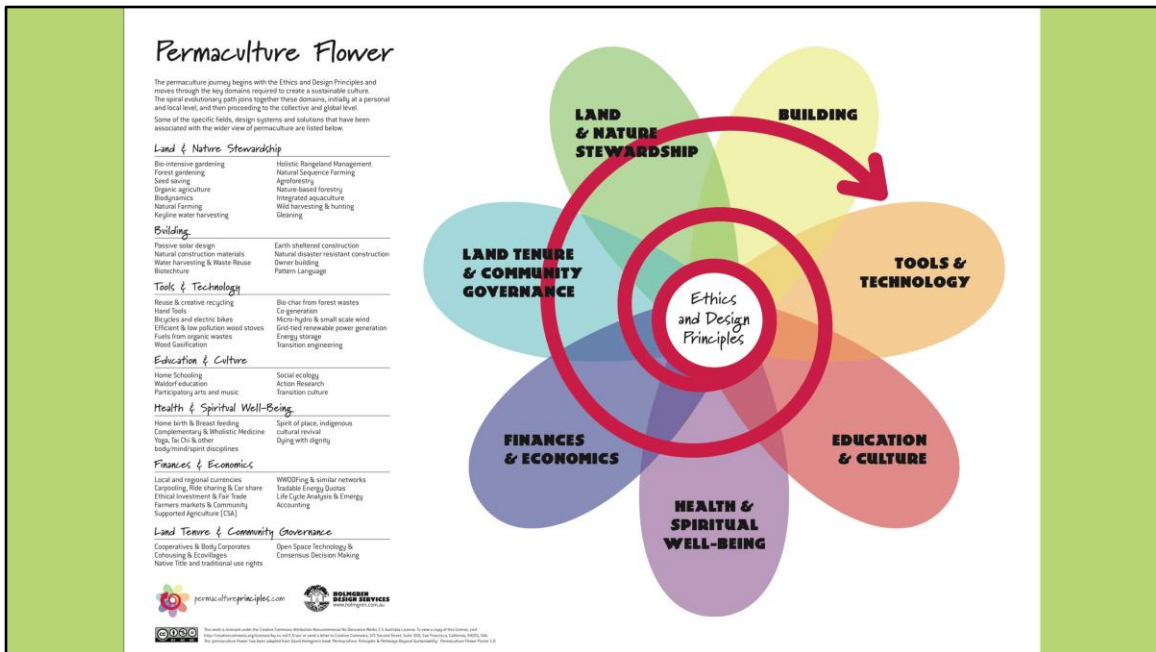
Permaculture Ethics & Principles provide the over arching thinking tools that when used together allow us to creatively redesign our environment and our behaviour in a world of less energy and resources.

At it's core are the 3 ethics of Earth Care, Fair Share and People Care
 Earth care – respecting the earth as the source of all life;
 People care – helping each other and ourselves to live sustainably
 Fair share – sharing the abundance or surplus and using the earth's limited resources in ways that are equitable and wise

Surrounding these Ethics are the 12 Design principles Observe and Interact, Catch and Store Energy, Obtain a Yield, Self Regulate & Accept Feedback, Use & Value Renewables, Produce No Waste, Design from Pattern to Detail, Use Small - Slow Solutions, Use & Value Diversity, Use Edges- Value the Marginal.

These Principles guide the Permaculture practioner through contemplation, reflection and experimentation. They are applicable to our personal, economic, social and political reorganisation.

We will shortly take a brief look at how each Principle applies in the context of LETS and how we can apply Permaculture Principles when looking to find solutions in LETS and also in our own lives.



This simple creation is what is known as the Permaculture Flower. It shows us seven key domains required to create a sustainable culture. The list to the left demonstrates clearly the synergies between the Permaculture movement and other movements which embrace and associate with permaculture ethics and principles.

As an example LETS fits within the Finance & Economics domain as a petal on the flower and falls under the field of local and regional currencies.

Many of the specific fields listed here are already happening within LETS groups such as seed saving and sharing, car pooling, home schooling and re-use and creative recycling.

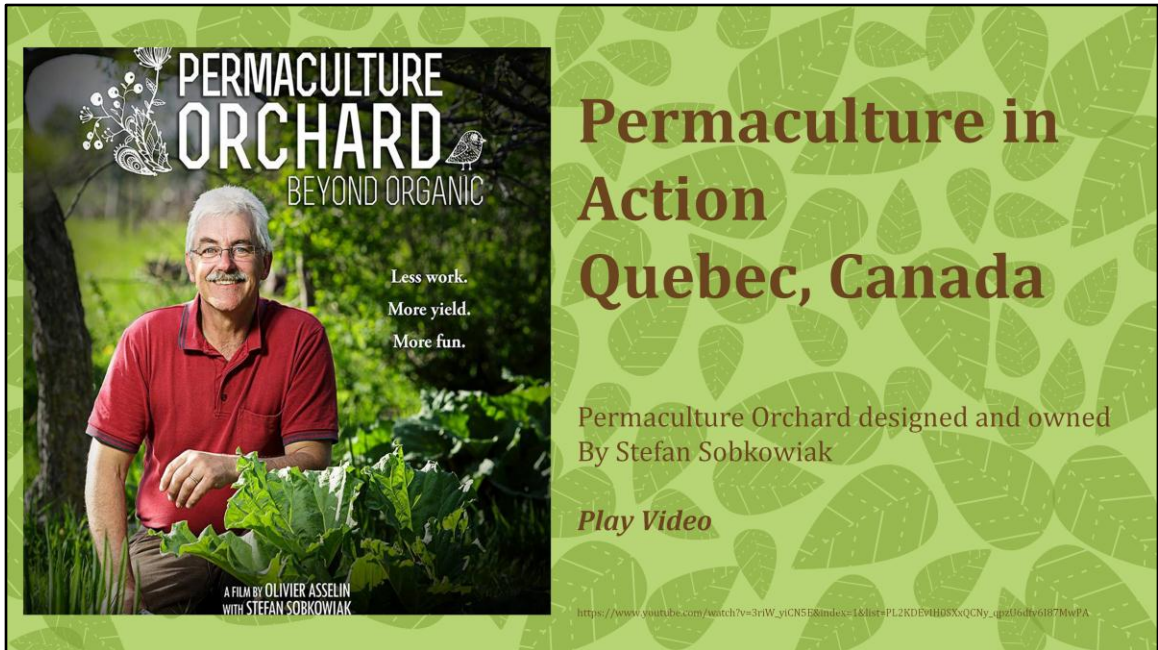


Now yes that's all rather interesting I hear you say but what does it have to do with LETS? The real question here is well what does LETS have to do with Permaculture? Here we see some wonderful examples from Tableland LETS of permaculture gatherings and collaborations with Permaculture Cairns involving their mutual membership by running workshops in compost making, growing food and making scarecrows and even a Permablitz, which involves going into someone's back yard and applying permaculture design techniques. These are classic examples of where cross fertilisation can occur without much effort between LETS and Permaculture.

Cross fertilisation can occur between any two groups where synergies exist. It also offers great scope for cross promotional opportunities.



Meanwhile down in Tasmania, CENTs have Caroline Smith, co-author of the Permaculture Pioneers publication and some CENTs traders have been learning about using an A-frame level, running courses in Introduction to Permaculture with a Permaculture Design Course soon to be offered, along with workshops and tutorials in fermented foods, edible weed foraging, raising chickens in suburbia and worm farming just to name a few.



Now to gain some insight as to what one can expect at the end of a permaculture design process, let's take a look at this great example of a Permaculture orchard in action in Quebec, Canada.

Play Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3riW_yiCN5E&index=1&list=PL2KDEvIH0S_XxQCny_qpzU6dfv6I87MwPA

LET'S Observe & Interact

Discuss examples of this Principle in action within your group OR how could it apply?

Do we have any Permies in the house who can give me a hand? I need 12 volunteers who will each be assigned one Principle to explore the following: Discuss examples of this Principle in action within your group OR how it could apply to your group?

Please scribe your examples in dot points on the paper supplied. The objective here is to talk and think about how Permaculture might work within your group.

Permies feel free to extrapolate out the Principle to give a broader overview if you wish.

This interactive session will be for around 5 minutes followed by a quick report back to the group.

Principle 1: Observe and interact

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder”

By taking the time to engage with nature we can design solutions that suit our particular situation.



This icon for this design principle represents a person 'becoming' a tree. In observing nature it is important to take different perspectives to help understand what is going on with the various elements in the system. The proverb “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” reminds us that we place our own values on what we observe, yet in nature, there is no right or wrong, only different.

<http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

Can I please have the champions of the Principles join me up the front?

We will just do a quick summary of the examples listed for each Principle.

The completed lists will be made available around the venue for later viewing.

List examples

Principle 2: Catch and store energy

“Make hay while the sun shines”

By developing systems that collect resources when they are abundant, we can use them in times of need.

This icon for this design principle represents energy being stored in a container for use later on, while the proverb “make hay while the sun shines” reminds us that we have a limited time to catch and store energy.



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List examples

Principle 3: Obtain a yield

“You can’t work on an empty stomach”

Ensure that you are getting truly useful rewards as part of the work that you are doing.



The icon of this design principle, a vegetable with a bite out of it, shows us that there is an element of competition in obtaining a yield, whilst the proverb “You can’t work on an empty stomach” reminds us that we must get immediate rewards to sustain us.

<http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

List examples

Principle 4: Apply self-regulation & accept feedback

“The sins of the fathers are visited on the children unto the seventh generation”

We need to discourage inappropriate activity to ensure that systems can continue to function well.

The icon of the whole earth is the largest scale example we have of a self regulating ‘organism’ which is subject to feedback controls, like global warming. The proverb “the sins of the fathers are visited unto the children of the seventh generation” reminds us that negative feedback is often slow to emerge. **US.**



<http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

List examples

Principle 5: Use & value renewable resources & services

“Let nature take its course”

Make the best use of nature’s abundance to reduce our consumptive behaviour and dependence on non-renewable resources.



The horse icon represents both a renewable service and renewable resource. It can be used to pull a cart, plough or log and it can even be eaten – a non consuming use is preferred over a consuming one. The proverb “let nature take it’s course” reminds us that control over nature through excessive resource use and high technology is not only expensive, but can have a negative effect on our environment.

<http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

List examples

Principle 6: Produce no waste

“A stitch in time saves nine.” “Waste not, want not.”

By valuing and making use of all the resources that are available to us, nothing goes to waste.

The icon of the worm represents one of the most effective recyclers of organic materials, consuming plant and animal ‘waste’ into valuable plant food. The proverb “a stitch in time saves nine” reminds us that timely maintenance prevents waste, while “waste not, want not” reminds us that it’s easy to be wasteful in times of abundance, but this waste can be a cause of hardship later.



<http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

List examples

Principle 7: Design from patterns to details

“Can’t see the forest for the trees”

By stepping back, we can observe patterns in nature and society. These can form the backbone of our designs, with the details filled in as we go.



Every spider’s web is unique to its situation, yet the general pattern of radial spokes and spiral rings is universal. The proverb “can’t see the forest for the trees” reminds us that the closer we get to something, the more we are distracted from the big picture.

<http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

List examples

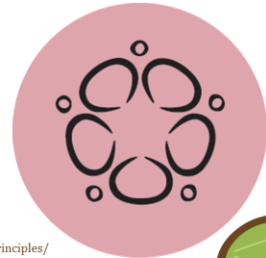
Principle 8: Integrate rather than segregate

“Many hands make light work”

By putting the right things in the right place, relationships develop between them and they support each other.

This icon represents a group of people from a bird’s-eye view, holding hands in a circle together. The space in the centre could represent “the whole being greater than the sum of the parts”. The proverb “many hands make light work” suggests that when we work together the job becomes easier.

<http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>



List examples

Principle 9: Use small and slow solutions

“The bigger they are, the harder they fall.” “Slow and steady wins the race.”

Small and slow systems are easier to maintain than big ones, making better use of local resources and produce more sustainable outcomes.



The snail is both small and slow, it carries its home on its back and can withdraw to defend itself when threatened. The proverb “the bigger they are, the harder they fall” reminds us of the disadvantages of excessive size and growth while “slow and steady wins the race” encourages patience while reflecting on a common truth in nature and society.

<http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

List examples

Principle 10: Use and value diversity

“Don’t put all your eggs in one basket”

Diversity reduces vulnerability to a variety of threats and takes advantage of the unique nature of the environment in which it resides.

The remarkable adaptation of the spinebill and hummingbird to hover and sip nectar from long, narrow flowers with their spine-like beak symbolises the specialisation of form and function in nature. The proverb “don’t put all your eggs in one basket” reminds us that diversity offers insurance against the variations of our environment.



<http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

List examples

Principle 11: Use edges & value the marginal

“Don’t think you are on the right track just because it’s a well-beaten path”

The interface between things is where the most interesting events take place. These are often the most valuable, diverse and productive elements in the system.



The icon of the sun coming over the horizon with a river in the foreground shows us a world composed of edges. The proverb “don’t think you are on the right track just because its a well-beaten path” reminds us that the most popular is not necessarily the best approach.

<http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

List examples

Principle 12: Creatively use and respond to change

“Vision is not seeing things as they are but as they will be”

We can have a positive impact on inevitable change by carefully observing, and then intervening at the right time.

The butterfly is a positive symbol of transformative change in nature, from its previous life as a caterpillar. The proverb “vision is not seeing things as they are but as they will be” reminds us that understanding change is much more than a linear projection.



<http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

List examples



Thank you all for your participation. Each of the Principles discussed will be put up in the break for you to look at your convenience and will also be made available post conference on the Tableland LETS website.

For those interested in exploring the world of Permaculture further there is a link here to a FREE 12 page PDF Booklet entitled Essence of Permaculture – It’s a summary of Permaculture concepts and principles taken from Permaculture Principles and Pathways Beyond Sustainability by David Holmgren.

http://holmgren.com.au/downloads/Essence_of_Pc_EN.pdf

This Booklet should also be read in conjunction with the link to a short video Permaculture Ethics and Design Principles with David Holmgren

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_-J71k2bXE&feature=youtu.be

I would like you to keep in mind it is how we look at things that makes them advantageous or not. Bill Mollison once said “You haven’t got an excess of slugs, you’ve got a duck deficiency. So when collaborating with other groups it’s about seeing solutions not problems.

The Sandbox Syndrome

Emeritus Professor Stuart B. Hill retells the parable of the "sandbox syndrome" and how real progress will be made when we "find commonality with others, form alliances and develop new measures of success. By keeping ourselves separate and competitive we limit what we are trying to do.

Collaborate across difference to achieve broadly shared goals – don't end up isolated, alone in a 'sandbox'."



Play Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fzt8ymehIlo>

I will leave you with this poignant observation from Emeritus Professor Stuart Hill, the Foundation Chair of Social Ecology at the University of Western Sydney who retells the parable of the "sandbox syndrome" and how real progress will be made when we "find commonality with others, form alliances and develop new measures of success. By keeping ourselves separate and competitive we limit what we are trying to do.

He asks us to: "Collaborate across difference to achieve broadly shared goals – don't end up isolated, alone in a 'sandbox'".

Play Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fzt8ymehIlo>



Thank you with acknowledgements to:

- Community Exchange Network Tasmania (CENTs) <http://www.nwcents.org/>
- Tableland LETS <http://www.tablelandlets.org/>
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- Central Coast LETS <http://www.centralcoastlets.org/>
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