

The Rights of Nature Principles

New Orleans Statement

October 28, 2017

We, the undersigned, adopt these principles for the rights of nature movement in order to secure the recognition of legally enforceable rights of nature as a valid and distinct body of thought and law.

WHEREAS, nature is the source of all life, and should be recognized as a subject of inherent rights, and

WHEREAS, the existence and health of major ecosystems on the planet are now in jeopardy, and

WHEREAS, conventional environmental law is unable to arrest this decline, and

WHEREAS, existing law fails to recognize nature and its constituent ecosystems as interconnected, living components capable of possessing rights of their own, and

WHEREAS, this failure exacerbates the plight of nature and impedes efforts to protect and restore nature;

THEREFORE, a new system of law based on respect of nature must emerge which recognizes nature as a subject of law and a rights-holder, and

THEREFORE, these rights should be independent of, and supplemental to, responsibilities under existing law, and

THEREFORE, we call upon, and commit ourselves to supporting, communities, peoples, organizations, and governments to enact, implement, and enforce “rights of nature” laws, that:

1. Recognize inherent rights of nature to exist, flourish, evolve, and regenerate, and to restoration, recovery, and preservation;
2. Guarantee the right of nature to appear as the real party in interest in administrative proceedings and legal actions affecting these rights;
3. Provide that those committed to protecting these rights be authorized to represent them in these proceedings; and
4. Require that damages derived from these proceedings be used solely to protect nature and restore nature to its prior natural state.

Organizations are listed for identification purposes only.

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