

Permaculture: A Description

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Bill Mollison of New Zealand came up with the term *Permaculture* in the mid-70's after spending three years in the forest studying the cycles and patterns in nature. It is derived from the words *permanent* and *agriculture*. It can be seen as the conscious design of our working relationship with nature.

To me it says "sustainable." It mirrors on a physical level what we strive for on a spiritual level – sustainability.

- A conscious replication of the natural cycles and patterns of the spiritual realm enacted on a physical level.
- Day to day growing and producing a self-sustainable model for the world.

Each example, although run according to the principles of Permaculture, takes on its unique appearance through interaction and inter-relationships between organisms and their particular surroundings, the unique environmental factors of that specific area, the culture of that area, and respect for the belief systems of the people in that area.

The outcomes of good design should include:

- Sustainable land use strategies, without wastes and pollution;
- Established systems for healthy food production, and maybe some surplus;
- Restoration of degraded landscapes, resulting in conservation of endemic species – especially rare and endangered species.
- Integration and harmony of all living things on the property – all things live in an atmosphere of co-operation or interact in natural cycles.
- Minimal consumption of energy (using solar, wind generated energy, alternative technology, etc.)
- What is best for the land and what is best for the people who live there.

What is currently known as a "design" is really only a pictorial representation of the implied inter-relationships between objects, structures, plants, and types of species, plans, animals, and humans. A drawing like this only gives information about placement and types of species – and nothing about their interaction, which is the most important thing about any ecosystem.

Designing for long-term sustainability means a harmonious integration of landscape, plants, animals and humans – as well as the placement of components or elements in recognizable patterns. The ethics of earth care, people care, limits-aware, and surplus-share govern the design – even though the design strategies and techniques vary from place to place.