

PINE NOTES

SPRING 2011

Update: What and who is PINE, anyway?

PINE (The Permaculture Institute of the Northeast) is a non-profit organization that increases the resilience of the Northeast region by strengthening the regional permaculture network and increasing access to relevant education and resources. In our work, we facilitate communications, research and outreach within our network and beyond.

Now over four years in the making, seven volunteer board members currently represent PINE, offering voices connected with permaculture hubs throughout the Northeast including Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts and New York. At present, our board includes Jono Neiger (western MA), Roxy Finn (western MA), Steve Gabriel (Finger Lakes, NY), Lisa Fernandes (Portland, ME), Alice Lo (Hudson Valley/New York City, NY), Keith Morris (Johnson, VT) and Mark Krawczyk (Burlington, VT) who meet each month to discuss and facilitate current PINE projects.



We aim to maintain a diverse board, reflecting a range of ages, regions, areas of expertise and backgrounds. To help us better serve the region, we intend to convene a regional spokescouncil who will provide additional voices, so that we might be better aware of the needs and opportunities within the region.

(cont. on p. 2)



Pine supports local permaculture groups, individuals and networks by:

- Coordinating communications across the Northeast PC network through a newsletter, websites and social networking
- Supporting the establishment of regional gatherings, convergences & spokescouncils
- Spearheading the creation of a regional PC database to increase access to courses, designers & practitioners

Our work is inspired by the following values:

- PC ethics of earth care, people care & fair share
- Transparency
- Humility
- Being of service to the greater regional PC community
- Reflecting the needs, issues & opportunities of the network
- Supporting decentralization, local autonomy & self-organizing across the network
- Encouraging symbiosis, cooperation & collaboration
- Valuing ecological patterns of organization

INSIDE:

Northeast Regional Updates

Cayuta Sun: A Case Site Study



PINE NOTES

(cont. from p. 1)

We see our supportive role in the region as being most effective by helping to facilitate (literally - 'to make easier') the spread and dissemination of permaculture principles and practices. The PINE organization doesn't necessarily do the work, but rather helps to connect folks with human, printed, electronic and economic resources that will encourage the development of more localized regional permaculture 'nodes'. During our recent retreat in Vermont on March 24, the board further defined our collective vision for PINE.

We all share an infectious passion for community organization and a desire to help nurture the roots of permaculture groups in our neighboring towns, cities and sub-regions.

We would like to see PINE function from a positivist perspective - helping our regional network better self-organize, rather than aiming to sculpt the network ourselves. This vision gave rise to a powerful metaphor that spoke to all of us. Recognizing the vital linking role mycorrhizal fungi play in developing healthy and interconnected plant communities, we see PINE as the only-recently (1996) discovered 'glomalin' glycoprotein exudate that mycelium produce, helping to aggregate soil particles, build structure and hold onto stored carbon. Here, the individual plants represent projects, individuals, groups, etc; the mycorrhizae reflect our regional network; and PINE serves as the glue that helps to solidify these connections. Hey, we all gotta 'stick' together, right?

In 2010 PINE received 501c3 nonprofit status, which enables us to serve as a fiscal sponsor for ad hoc groups and businesses who pursue grant funding that they may not otherwise be eligible for. We are in the process of working to envision a regional database of permaculture projects, teachers and educational/apprenticeship opportunities. This is the first installment of a soon-to-be quarterly newsletter in which we'll share stories from around the region, case studies, and other interesting updates. We also support the annual Northeast Permaculture Convergence and help to organize smaller regional gatherings throughout the year.

VISIT PINE ONLINE:

www.thepine.org



REGIONAL UPDATE: Permaculture at a CT College

By Kate McConnell

Here at Wesleyan University, located in Middletown, CT, the new student group WILD Wes (Working for Intelligent Design), has been vying for permacultural principles to be adopted into the University's landscaping practices.

In the past year, the group hosted its first annual Sustainable Landscaping Design Charrette, where Wesleyan faculty, administrative members, permaculturists, landscaping experts, and students from Wesleyan and nearby Northeastern colleges converged.

At the conference, groups collaborated to develop permacultural and sustainable landscape designs for over a half dozen sites on the Wesleyan campus. Additionally, during the 2011 spring semester, a weekly student led class, "Sustainable Landscape Design Studio", offered a multidisciplinary curriculum that both educated students in sustainable land use principles and developed technical drafting skills. Students produced designs for multiple sites around campus, with the guiding expertise of professional landscape designers and permaculturalists.

This summer, after a year of researching, planning, and consulting, we are finally beginning the physical implementation of our first designs. After discussions with the University's Grounds Management, we have been granted custodial responsibility of a 1/3 acre plot centrally located on campus. In addition, we have been granted \$50,000 from the University's Green Fund to carry out the project. Between May and August we will be constructing swales, sheet mulching, and cover cropping the entire area, with the intent to begin planting this coming fall and spring.

The "Sustainable Landscape Design Studio" will be offered again during both semesters of the 2011/2012 academic year. It will be used as a forum to develop a concrete implementation plan for our current site, and to create novel designs for more sites on campus. We hope to be simultaneously designing and implementing new sites for many years into the future.



If you have any specific expertise or knowledge that you would like to share with students in the coming year's class, would like to contribute to the implementation process, or have any questions about the project, feel free to contact Emma Leonard at elleonard@wesleyan.edu or Katie McConnell at kamcconnell@wesleyan.edu.

CASE SITE STUDY PC Citizen Science at Cayuta Sun, Finger Lakes, NY

By Steve Gabriel

Over its roughly forty year life span, permaculture has accomplished much around the world, helping people provide for their needs while improving the health and resilience of local ecosystems. Early on, co-founders Bill Mollison and David Holmgren found early on a resistance to permaculture ideas in the academic world, due partly to the lack of data and documentation so loved in a reductionist setting and because permaculture demands a more interdisciplinary approach to problem solving.

In my own pursuit of permaculture over the last 9 years I, like many fellow colleagues, have tended to avoid more scientific approaches, instead preferring to rely on my own primary observation and on anecdotal evidence that sheet mulching, forest gardening, and other strategies actually work. While this approach might work for many of us, I see it as the largest barrier in getting permaculture to become mainstream, at least in our US culture which still demands we put data and numbers behind our theories.

This past year, I've been a participant in a joint project between NE-SARE, Cornell University, and the University of Vermont that has worked to educate and support 20 farms in the northeast with a startup shiitake mushroom enterprise. Each farm has inoculated 100 logs and will collect data over the next three seasons to determine the viability of shiitake as an agricultural crop. The ability to do this has only come after ten solid years of shiitake research at Cornell and other institutions. Working with this project, I've been inspired to think about ways we can engage our permaculture community in meaningful, data-oriented projects to put proof behind the practices we feel so strongly about.

In this vein I want to share with readers a project we at the Finger Lakes Permaculture Institute (FLPCI) are undertaking to start a network based on the citizen science model. As part of our summer program, our apprentices will be establishing and maintaining two polycultures and establishing the types of data (both anecdotal and numerical) that can provide some evidence to the benefits of forest garden style polycultures. We are in the early stages of design but hope to get others around the northeast on board starting next year.

The polycultures will be established at Cayuta Sun, which is home to many of the FLPCI's programs and projects. The first polyculture will take the lead of the Apple Guild described in Mollison's earlier work, with a slight change: we'll be substituting apples for a cultivated Juneberry (*Amalanchier anifolia* "JB30"), which is also in the rose family and is a species identified by Cornell as an emerging small fruit with commercial potential in New York State.

Our second polyculture will be feature a Black, English, and Carpathian Walnut overstory with jugalone-tolerant species (including Hazelnut and Paw Paw!) occupying the understory. We'll be planting this polyculture at Cayuta Sun and at Cornell's MacDaniels Nut Grove, which is an established forest farm conducting research on nut crops, mushrooms, ornamentals, and medicinal plants grown under a forest canopy.

We are working with our apprentices to establish data collection protocols and will be publishing complete information on our selected species, costs, labor, and establishment techniques toward the end of the summer. We'll be looking for other project sites and permies to join us by planting these polycultures in the 2012 growing season. Data and trends will be published on the web and through a Google Earth interface.

In addition to this project we have partnered with the National Phenology Network on another Citizen Science project mapping climate change through the study of cloned lilacs planted around the United States. More information can be found at: www.usanpn.org/lilac.

Please feel free to contact me if interested in this project at steve@fingerlakespermaculture.org.

REGIONAL UPDATE: Mid-Hudson Valley, NY

Standing on Shoulders Planting Seeds By Avery Jenkins

If the world were about to end I would want to be in the Mid-Hudson Valley. Best I can tell, permaculture is somewhere around its third generation in these parts. Because of groundwork done raising awareness over the years by many passionate people, infrastructure on both physical and more subtle planes has laid ground for an emergent culture with values in line with both people and planet. Don't get me wrong, we must be ever vigilant as we design with our "Triple Bottom Line"(People, Planet, Profit), for in profit there is always room for Disaster. I take this as the fourth given after birth, death and taxes. This "emergent culture" gets a chance to show face at the Northeastern Permaculture Convergence being held on the grounds of Epworth Camp and Retreat Center in High Falls, NY the weekend of July 22-24.

Living in the Hudson Valley I find myself often surrounded by people past the point of asking what has gone wrong with our culture. Instead, I hear questions like, "What are the cultural values we would like to see guiding humanity seven generations from now?" I not only hear people asking this question, but I see people doing something about it. People like David Brownstein and his staff over at Wild Earth, a camp dedicated to connecting kids with nature and bringing back a culture of mentoring through skills like bird language, tracking and primitive skills.

Hundreds of people locally and from afar have now earned a Permaculture Design Certificate with the help of the many certified permaculture trainers living in the region such as Joan Ewing and Wilton Duckworth of Green Phoenix Permaculture and Dyami Neson-Regan and Ethan Roland of Appleseed Permaculture, to name a few.

For anyone interested in the finely tuned techniques of Rudolph Steiner's Biodynamic farming method, the Pfeiffer Center in Chestnut Ridge offers an excellent one year/part-time training.

Aside from the agricultural and nature based aspects of permaculture there are many business and organizations which exemplify permaculture values. The Climate Action Coalition meets every Thursday from 5-6:30pm at the New Paltz library organizing to bring awareness and forward action on pertinent regional environmental issues. The Rosendale Theatre Collective, which has rejuvenated a local movie theatre showing a

variety of independent films, documentaries and the occasional concert or rally. Root Tech cafe in New Paltz sells great fair trade coffee, puts on various small events, fixes computers and actively helps spread the word and use of open source software. The member-run High Falls Food Co-op has a decent selection of local goods and the best herbal selection around. If you or anyone you know is interested in connecting to the permaculture network in the Rondout Valley to do projects and/or to simply learn more about what is going on, head on over to the Rondout Valley Permaculture Meetup which meets the first Monday of every month at the Marbletown Community Center in Stone Ridge from 7:30-10pm.

There are many factors that have led this area to progress to the point that it has. The Family Farm Festival, which ran from 2003-07, had Permaculture fed into it by people like Dina Falconi of Falcon Formulations, who advocates Food as Medicine and the Slow Food Movement. Events like this and efforts by people like Dina to spread the word about permaculture act as a sort of homeopathic dispersal of information and values. There are many awareness-building events in this region and institutions including the Omega institute, the Shambala center for natural studies, the Sky Lake Lodge among others actively contributing to both the physical and spiritual awareness of many people who live in and visit the Hudson Valley.

As long as all of us in this region can remain present in our daily lives and maintain our growing network and openness to learning from all our relations, this design process based on Values which hold all life sacred that we call Permaculture may just bring us to a place beyond what we can foresee as possible in this moment. In closing, I challenge you to dream of what's possible and put behind you any concept of imminent doom. We can choose this path to a regenerative future.

Avery Jenkins was born in the Catskill Mountains in upstate New York and now lives in High Falls, NY in the Shawangunk mountains. He received his Permaculture Design Certificate through the Regenerative Design Institute at DQ University in September 2010. Currently, his personal focus is creating food forests at his home and in the Catskills while finishing a bachelor degree in Applied Permaculture Design with Gaia University. Contact: ajmossybrook1@gmail.com