

EARTH DREAMING

THE ROOT STRUCTURE



Contents

Introduction

1. Principles of Earthdreaming
2. What is Earthdreaming?
3. Structure for creating an Earthdreamers' invitation
4. Earthdreamer alliance
5. Structure and role of the Collective
6. Group decision-making
7. We are the ones we have been waiting for

Since its launch at a gathering in Oxford in March 2011, the Earthdreamers project has begun to explore the vision of combining ecstatic dance, movement and shamanic practice with social, environmental and political activism. There has been a second gathering in London and a handful of autonomous actions, events and ceremonies around the UK.

Meanwhile, the collective that originally made the call out has re-constellated and has been working towards greater clarity about what defines Earthdreaming. We humbly acknowledge your patience and understanding as we have grown this tender seedling, and trust it will be worth the wait. A number of you have engaged in different ways over the past few months and have made important contributions to the process of defining and co-creating Earthdreaming. We offer our thanks for this and invite you to engage in and co-create this next stage.

In September, seven of us met for a weekend in Wiltshire to dance, dream, discuss and ground the vision by laying a foundation for Earthdreamers to function as an active, fluid network. We sought to establish a supportive decision-making structure and create a framework for how those in the network can propose and co-create initiatives. The structures outlined below are an invitation for everyone to get involved, active and dancing for the earth.

During the meeting in Wiltshire, we also spent some time planning a street action, which took place on Saturday 24 September. A group of Earthdreamers held an earth dance and ritual at an ancient ceremonial site on the edge of the Square Mile (London's financial centre) and then carried this energy into the financial district. There, on a patch of ground in the midst of the banks and trade exchanges, we planted a hardy twisted willow, made some prayers and danced a celebration. Our intention was to symbolically and energetically return the Tree of Life to its rightful place at the heart of our culture – to remind ourselves, the land and anyone who witnessed that nature is primary. The inspiration for this action came from a desire to support the initiative to recognise the crime of ecocide and to bring recognition of Mother Earth Rights into international law.

1. Principles of Earthdreaming

As a collective of Earthdreamers, we inquired into and agreed the following:

- Earthdreaming arises from the 'dreambody', or living consciousness, of the earth. Therefore, any action arises from the intent to serve the earth and all life supported by her.
- The work needs to grow out of a receptive listening to the sacred feminine or yin energy in the first instance, so that it can truly grow from the root of earth consciousness. In practical terms this means we will always seek to meet, dream and dance, speak in circle and/or enter ceremony as part of the preparations for any Earthdreaming action.
- Intention is the key to manifestation. We seek to initiate intent from this place of clarity of listening and vision, and we seek to be fully conscious in our co-creation of the dreams that we are dreaming.
- We are committed to creating transformation through peaceful and constructive means.
- We seek to make decisions through participation and by consensus. However, due in part to being geographically scattered, we also recognise that there may be times and situations when this may not be possible or viable.
- Earthdreaming is a participatory activity. The minimum number of participants is one; there is no maximum.
- We do this work as Earthdreamers. Our names and identities are relevant, because we are human beings, but they are not important.
- Earthdreaming is fundamentally a non-commercial and non-profit-making activity. All the work we do as Earthdreamers is a giveaway. As with most action-oriented organisations, at times we will need to invite donations to meet specific resourcing needs.

2. What is Earthdreaming?

We envisage that our interventions include one or more of the five ways of Earthdreaming as they were outlined in the original call out:

Dreaming Using ecstatic dance and shamanic practice (and other ways of entering conscious dreamtime) to align with the dreaming of the living earth, in order to sense what it is we need to bring forth in the service of healthy evolution. Dancing, drumming, walking – alone or together – opening up to the deep wisdom of organic potential and co-creation

– whether that manifests as direct action, campaigning, creative projects, ritual, or community or family work.

Healing Using movement as a way to experience and process our feelings around the world situations we face and hear of. Dancing with and through the fear and denial, the anger and frustration, the grief and despair, the impotence, nihilism and resignation – as well as dancing with and through the gratitude, the joy, the hope, the strength, conviction and belief in possibilities for constructive change and real solutions.

Training Using dance and movement as a training and preparation aid for social and ecological activists to reconnect with their deepest dreams prior to engaging in direct action, campaigning or protest. Using tools and methods from 5Rhythms, Movement Medicine, Trance Dance, the Work That Reconnects, the Pachamama Symposium and other relevant work to explore and practice responses to different situations, and to develop more effective strategies for our work. Using focused movement in a safe space to gather energy, define the ground we stand on, and centre ourselves – taking a breath before moving into action, and taking another when it is done, with a space for debrief, processing and learning from what has happened.

Action Using dance and movement as a primary tool of direct action for a more balanced world. This could mean taking to the streets in a dancing bloc as part of a mass demonstration, or dancing in a particular location as an act of targeted protest, occupation or civil disobedience. Exploring how dance and conscious embodiment can be used both as creative political action and as empowered tactical response to the methods of the police, security and others employed to defend the structures that are damaging the earth's fragile ecological balance and hurting us all.

Ceremony Holding dancing ceremonies with sacred and positive political, ecological or social intent. Using movement as a shamanic dreaming tool and prayer vessel with the purpose of raising energy for the planet's resilience and sending support, healing and love to all peoples, beings and lands facing direct challenges to their existence or well-being.

3. Structure for creating an Earthdreamers' invitation

Our collective sense is that a great number of people have the desire and energy to play a part in addressing the challenges we face right now. We feel that many are simply waiting for an invitation to join the process of co-creating new, truly sustainable ways of living on this planet. So we set out to dream a form for this.

Our intention has been to create a set of simple guidelines and a more or less decentralised framework by which Earthdreamers anywhere can initiate and organise interventions of many different kinds, and by which those invitations can then be offered out to others who may be interested. This is a proposition and a work in progress. Please use the framework in ways that work for you, adapt as necessary, and make it your own. And feedback what works or doesn't.

We discern three necessary roles and stages to begin something. These roles can and probably often will become shared and mixed to some extent, but it feels important to establish them clearly near the start so that projects can be developed in balanced and effective ways.

Dreamer The dreamer births a vision, idea or plan for an Earth Dreaming action, intervention, creative act or event. This is a seed, which may come in dance, dreaming or ceremony, or through walking, writing, singing, or other sacred means. It may simply land in a lucid moment in daily life. In the highest integrity, this role involves acting as a channel for a message coming through the dreamtime from the earth. It is of course possible for dreams to come through more than one dreamer, either through co-dreaming in collaboration or in circle, or through more than one person receiving the same or similar dream in parallel.

Seed-keeper The dreamer shares the dream-seed that has been received with someone willing to be a seed-keeper. This person's role is to work with the dreamer in discerning the exact nature of the vision, and to establish an overview of how to proceed. This role also involves providing a continuity of dispassionate care for that Earthdream. The role is intentionally separate from the dreamer, who may become emotionally attached to or conflicted about 'their' vision as it begins the journey from the mysterious and into the physical realms.

Earth-bringer The dreamer and the seed-keeper then invite one or several people to be earth-bringers. This role needs to be filled by a practical person who is in a position to bring what is needed to make things 'real'. This role involves taking practical action in collaboration with the dreamer (and probably, but not necessarily, the seed-keeper, too) around assessing the needs of the project, gathering resources, deciding on locations & timings, discerning more specific roles, communicating with others, and taking care of any other tasks necessary to manifest the vision.

Germination

Working together in whatever combination, the dreamer, seed-keeper and earth-bringer(s) become an Earthdreamers 'germination group' to manifest the particular dream that has brought them together, and to co-lead a process or action in whatever form it takes.

Another layer of specific roles may emerge according to the intervention, such as facilitation, music provision, communication, scouting and so on.

If the dream is to involve others, the role of the germination group is to create an invitation that other Earthdreamers can participate in. (This participation probably needs to have a degree of decision making and co-creation built into the process, so that all participants have the opportunity to become included and committed in whatever roles they then take.) If the dream is something to carry out as individuals or as a small group, then of course it's possible to go right ahead.

We invite germination groups (dreamers, seed-keepers, earth-bringers) to consider the following in order to clarify and manifest an Earthdream:

Landing the vision

- How has this dream come to you and what is the energy/quality of it?
- What is the intention of this dream? What is/are the desired outcome(s) that the dream is moving towards accomplishing/supporting on the planet?
- Is this a dream for individual engagement or something that is calling you to invite others into? (note: even if it is an individual project, consider whether it may be helpful to have a seed keeper.)

- What form should it take? Which of the five aspects of Earthdreaming (see above for definitions) does this dream speak to? In other words, what kind of project is it suggesting, and how would the project use dance, activism and/or ceremony?
- Are you willing to offer this work as a giveaway in service of the earth and her dreaming? Do you have any commercial, personal, artistic or profile-raising agenda? If so, we suggest that your project is offered through the Earthdreamer alliance (see notes below).
- Is it a seed for co-creation and participation, or have you come with it as a complete vision? In which case, again, we suggest this is something to share through the Earthdreamer alliance.

Manifestation

- What are the parameters of the invitation you are creating? What is it? Where will it take place? When? For how long? How many people do you see being involved?
- What resources will be needed? (material, musical, space/venue, financial, emotional, food, water and so on.)
- What specific roles (within earth-bringer) are required for this project and who is able and willing to hold them? For example, some of the following may be relevant: music – playing/ DJing/other provision; facilitation; communication – contact people for participants, communication with non-participants (onlookers if out in public space/press if attempting to communicate a message through media); lookouts; legal advisor and so on.
- If going ‘out into the world’ for an action, when and where will you meet to prepare?
- What are the implications of the answers to all these? What have you not thought of?

Announcement

If you have an invitation that you would like to offer to the Earthdreamers network, please contact us at collective@earthdreamers.org (see below for info on who this is) and send us the details.

The collective will check out your proposal and offer any support that we are able to and which seems appropriate. If there’s consensus to go ahead with this as an Earthdreamer invitation, you’ll need to write a short, inspiring paragraph to go out to the network and on the website.

4. Earthdreamer alliance

So Earthdreaming comes as an invitation to others to co-create and participate. We are aware that there are many resonant activities out there that people would like to promote through the network. We will create some space for those engaged in creative activities that resonate with this vision but do not fit the criteria of Earthdreaming as we have defined it, for example, those offering performances or workshops that are not participative/non-profit. This information can then go to the network in a clearly defined way that allows creative and positive energy to move. Another distinction between the two modes would be that if you are offering an Earthdreamer invitation, the project would be offered in the name of Earthdreaming rather than in your own or others' name, theatre company, movement business or social change organisation. We welcome alliances with resonant organisations and individuals, while wanting to maintain clarity about Earthdreamers' work being of a non-profit nature, offered without any agenda other than as a human giveaway in service of the earth.

5. Structure and role of the Collective

At the Wiltshire gathering we agreed that the Earthdreamers Collective is a fluid entity comprised of those who regularly attend gatherings and meetings and who are willing to contribute to what needs doing. (We aspire to having four gatherings every year, held seasonally; the locations where there is currently energy for this are Oxford, London, Wiltshire and Devon.) We see the Collective as a holding point at the centre of a web (the 'network') made up of autonomous local and interest-based nodes.

The roles we discern for the Collective are:

- Supporting proposals for Earthdreamer interventions that come from the wider network.
- Administering the website, email list and forum to facilitate the flow of connection, initiatives and information across the wider network.

We are currently in the process of creating an online Earthdreamers forum (replacing the Convore space, which served us well but has been found to have some technical shortcomings) to provide a convenient and inspirational space for discussion and planning.

6. Group decision-making

We also spent time exploring ways and structures for group decision-making. We agreed it is important to be the change we wish to see in the world, in terms of creating a culture that supports equality, diversity and universal empowerment. To this end we agreed to use participatory decision-making as a guiding principle and work on the basis of making decisions through reaching consensus whenever possible. For anyone who is interested, we recommend *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* by Sam Kaner et al.

7. We are the ones we have been waiting for

We intend and hope that this framework can empower people to step into the role of being Earthdreamers and co-leaders in this vision. We are well aware that this is an embryonic and evolving process, in which it is our intention to be open and responsive to the dream as it emerges, to avoid fossilization and to continue to allow the vision to grow, like a plant, in its own time and according to its own momentum.

What is the earth saying to you? What seeds are you called to share and plant?

Find some other willing planters, put those seeds in the soil and begin the watering...

Come, earth dwellers, dance into the dreaming, for it is all of ours, and the time for transformation is now.

For All Our Relations,

Earthdreamers Collective, autumn 2011

collective@earthdreamers.org