

The 2011 NORTHWEST PERMACULTURE CONVERGENCE IS LOOKING FOR TEAM PLAYERS !

PORTLAND, OREGON

The 2nd annual Northwest Permaculture Convergence (NWPC) will be held September 16-18 (tentative dates) in Portland, Oregon. 380 people attended the 1st NWPC which was held at South Seattle Community College on September 19-21, 2010. It was the expanded successor to the Washington State Permaculture Convergences held in 2008 (115 people) and 2009 (170 people).

At the 2011 Northwest Permaculture Convergence we are aiming for 500 people and over 50 educational/networking opportunities with workshops, keynote speakers, round table discussions, hands-on and demos. This gathering is for permaculturists throughout Oregon and Washington. Because of the location in Portland we expect an especially big turnout from the permaculture community in the Portland area as well as members of the general public who want to explore how permaculture can be useful in their yards and endeavors. There have been 12 Oregon permaculture convergences over the last couple decades but every one of them was in the Eugene area. This will be the first in Portland.

The team to pull all this together is just forming and you are invited to join. This year we need about 25 coordinators for different aspects of the convergence plus numerous volunteers ahead of time. A lot of the work during the conference will be done by people work-trading for admission.

The 2011 start-up team is Charlotte Anthony, Susan Navrotsky, Amber Peoples, Michael Pilarski and Jan Spencer. Would you care to join us? [See contact information at the end of this letter.] A small advisory board is forming. Other people have helped in various ways but haven't fully committed. Several people are planning to join the team this spring when they have more time.

The price of the 2011 convergence remains to be seen. Once venue negotiations are over we can make a budget. The 2010 convergence admission was \$65 early bird special; \$85 Aug 16-Sept 12; and \$100 at the door. We may be able to lower the admission price in 2011. Partial and Full Work/Trade options available. On-site housing will be an additional charge (information pending). Camping on site will be available for a small extra charge. We have found a venue in Portland that will serve our needs nicely. We are in the process of working out an agreement with the venue so cannot say where yet.

Coordinator and Volunteer Positions

Following are some job categories, comments, job descriptions and number of people needed.

You can pick your level of involvement

Coordinators. Take on a major task for the convergence. Coordinate efforts and volunteers to accomplish task goals.

Co-coordinators. Two or even more people can share the same position. Job-sharing.

Pre-convergence Volunteers. Assist one of the coordinators in getting things done before the convergence.

On-site Volunteers. Work several shifts during the convergence and/or set-up and take-down.

Registration

Susan Navrotsky. Head registrar/secretary. Handles and tracks registration, Paypal and mail. Sends confirmations. Other administrative duties. Responds to questions. Sends monthly updates to the webmaster for the online newsletter. Sets up registration table at the convergence and coordinates staffing it.

Sponsor/Fund Raising

Solicits sponsors to raise funds and in-kind donations. Marketing alliances. Applies for grants.

Bookkeeper/Accountant

A CPA or someone experienced in accounting. Set up a system to track the money flow and maintain it.

Publicity

Everyone is on publicity. Spread the word to your friends, networks and people you think would be interested.

Some people specialize in publicity. What can you offer this team?

Graphic art

Create poster and promotional material

Press releases & ads

Poster and handbill distribution

TV and Radio

General Mailing

Presenter Committee

Coordinator and a small team of people.

Solicit and line up presenters ahead of time. Get their bios and workshop information. Send information to the webmaster. Make up a schedule ahead of time. Arrange moderators for panels. Make up a program and get it printed.

At the convergence, handle presenter check in and on-site assistance. Introduce keynote speakers.

Trade Show/Vending

Coordinator and understudy. We invite vendors who sell books, tools, nursery stock, local food or other appropriate products. The trade show is for permaculture designers and educators to market their services and trainings. The trade show can also include participants in related fields such as natural building, restoration, organic gardening and farming.

Solicit and register appropriate vendors and trade show participants.

Vendor/trade show placement and assistance during set-up.

Vendor/trade show liaison during convergence.

Webmaster(s)

One or more capable people. Website, forums, email newsletter. Electronic communication. Produce a periodic on-line newsletter with the latest news.

Portland Community Liaison

Help establish and maintain clear communication with sister Portland organizations such as City Repair, Tryon Farm, Columbia Ecovillage, Transition Town Portland, etc. Solicit local support and participation.

Volunteers and Work-trade Coordination

A coordinator (or two) is needed to keep track of the volunteers and work traders both before and during the event. Establish a system for people to sign up for shifts and track the results. The other coordinators will also be lining up some of their crew members ahead of time.

Site Set-up

Coordinator and volunteers. Help set up registration area, schedule/poster kiosk, decorations, etc. Set up outside structures (if any) tarps, tents, tables, seating. Supply any tools, ropes, etc needed.

Classroom Set-up

Workshop rooms need arranging, tables, chairs, etc.

Decoration

Coordinator and some volunteers. Natural and gaudy art, lights, color, banners waving, ambiance, whimsy, Need to line up the flags, props, etc before the event. Coordinator hopefully owns or can access supplies. Solicit people to bring things to loan or donate.

Sign Crew

Head sign-painter and volunteers.

Assemble needed paints, markers, sign material, etc.

Some signs need to be made up ahead of time; some at convergence set-up time, and perhaps a few during the convergence.

Sign placement. Might need sandwich boards, tape, push pins (as agreed upon by the venue).

Registration table at the convergence

Registrar has to train and coordinate volunteers to greet people, check them in, collect the money from those who haven't pre-paid. Registration also serves as the information booth to answer questions and direct people as needed. Registration is most busy at the beginning of the event and early mornings. Registration has to be staffed throughout the convergence.

Parking

Coordinator and volunteers.

The parking crew helps parking go smoothly. Make signs ahead of time and install. Perhaps the venue has sandwich boards and traffic cones. Parking areas include: day parking, tent camping parking area, RVs, dormitory room drop-off points, and delivery of goods.

Camping

A small crew should suffice. Make and install signs at the beginning of the event. Assist campers. Most busy at the beginning of the event. Keep an eye on the camping area. This is an area of overlap with parking and security.

Audio/Visual

Coordinator and team. Set up, monitor and troubleshoot power point projectors slide projectors, amplification for plenary speakers and other A/V needs. Get training from venue staff on how to operate on-site equipment. Obtain needed equipment if not on site.

Recording

Record keynote talks and at least some of the workshops. Does the venue have recording capabilities on site?

Kitchen

Perhaps the biggest job of the convergence. Keeping everyone happily fed. Meals are included in the admission price.

The venue has a large commercial kitchen and dining area. We will serve 8 meals: lunch and dinner on Friday; three meals on Saturday; breakfast and lunch on Sunday. Our plan is to offer a selection of food so that there is something to please everyone. Omnivores, vegetarians, vegans and raw foodists. A large percentage of the food will be locally grown or raised. Menus are partly determined by the food that is brought in by convergence attendees. The kitchen scene will require a number of coordinators as well as many volunteers and work traders.

Overall food coordinator. Menu planning, food ordering. Coordinate and orchestrate.

Various chefs who facilitate particular meals, in conjunction with specialty cooks who can prepare specific types of food such as raw food, vegan, salads, desserts, meat dishes, etc.

Meal prep and kitchen help will require a lot of work-traders.

Serving line coordinator

Kitchen cleaning coordinator with volunteers and work traders. During the event there is kitchen cleaning as well as meal dishes. The kitchen facilities will need to be thoroughly cleaned at the end of the event.

Tea Kitchen

Coordinator and volunteers. Two coordinators are nice.
Arrange for teas, tea-making supplies, coffee and accoutrements, and stove.
Set up tea area
Oversee, keep hot water canisters filled, make coffee and clean during the event.
Dismantle at the end.

Circles

Planning and facilitating plenary sessions and circles. Public presentations, announcements.

Entertainment

Coordinator (if needed). Performers. The organizers have not discussed this topic yet. At past convergences there was always singing and music around the campfire in the evening. People are encouraged to bring their musical instruments. Self-reliance in entertainment. However we are willing to consider entertainment proposals for 2011.

Sanitation

A few people need to share the job of periodically checking the restrooms and port-a-potties to keep them clean and supplied with toilet paper.

Site Facilitation

We could use a can-do, can-fix kinda person to troubleshoot infrastructure things that may come up (within guidelines established by the venue). The venue may have a facilities person on site.

First Aid

Coordinator and volunteers.
We would like to have several health care professionals on staff.
Establish a system for registering health care professionals (nurses, doctors and herbalists) who attend so we know who is on call and with what skills.

Kids Activities/Children's Area

Coordinator, volunteers and parents. Plan ahead. Assemble materials. Set up a children's area. Write up clear policies for parents to follow. Special activities. We are considering having a Teen Track at the convergence. Is anyone interested in this?

Compost, Recycling, Trash Crew

Coordinator and several volunteers.
Determine what systems are currently in place at the venue. Set up new systems as needed. Monitor and upkeep during the convergence. Arrange disposal and recycling. Arrange for organic material to go to a local farm for composting.

Firepit

Coordinator and a helper. We would like to have a firepit for evening music, singing and socializing. Someone needs to set up a firepit and arrange seating. (after meeting with venue superintendent on location and specs). Start and manage the fire. Extinguish it at the end of the evening. Obtain firewood (there is a budget for firewood). Clean up area and return it to its original state. Dispose of ashes offsite.

Night Lighting

One person. Depending on the weather (and if permitted by the venue), we could have Christmas lights, luminaries, and tiki torches at specific locations and times. Set up, monitor, maintain and clean-up.

Security

A coordinator and some volunteers. Responsible for locking up any needed building at night. Keep an eye on things, especially the tent camping area. In a way, everyone is on security and looks out for people who need help or for any potentially dangerous circumstances. The goal is that everyone is a responsible citizen.

Supplies

Maybe we could use a procurements person who helps obtain needed supplies. Most coordinators will be in charge of getting what they need for their areas of concern.

Clean-up Crew

Coordinator and volunteers. Decorations and signs removal. Disassemble any tarps, tents, etc. Litter patrol. Utilities wrap-up, etc. Best if set-up people are involved in clean up.

Off-campus Housing

Coordinator. Arrange for house-stays for out-of-town people who don't want to stay at the venue dormitory rooms. Have to line up housing ahead of time with specs and match that with people requesting housing. For the most part these arrangements should be made ahead of time. We do not know how much emphasis there will be on this (or need), as our hoped for venue has lots of low-cost 2-bed to 4-bed rooms.

Advisory Team

Be available for advice to the organizing team. Please only apply if you are a long-time member of the permaculture community or have extensive experience in event management. The initial advisory team consists of Jude Hobbs, Andrew Millison and Marisha Auerbach.

Best place to stay informed at the moment is the 2010 convergence website:
www.washingtonstatepermaculture.org/wordpress/

We will have a spiffy Volunteer Application Form online at some point

DON'T WAIT . . . SIGN UP NOW!

Tell us how you'd like to help . . . contact:
Susan Navrotsky 503-232-5657 snavrotsky@gmail.com,