

# DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION

CHANGING THE STORY AND THE SYSTEM  
FOR THE LONG-TERM WELLBEING OF  
PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

# SOLUTIONS ORIENTED

“In academic circles we often explore problems in great depth but fail to come up with creative ways to solve problems. Consequently we end up knowing a lot about problems but little about how to solve them—so we often end up failing to make a difference. As I wrestled with this challenge it occurred to me that there are at least four questions that we might fruitfully address:



What do we think we know?



What is the narrative that informs our interpretation of the world we live in?



What kind of difference do we want to make?



How can we begin to make that difference?”

**Fred Kirchenmann**

*Cultivating an Ecological Conscience*

# WHAT SOLUTIONS REALLY LOOK LIKE



**Long-Term Orientation**

WE NEED SOLUTIONS THAT PROVIDE LASTING RESULTS. THIS ENTAILS SOLVING TODAY'S PROBLEMS IN A WAY THAT CONSIDERS LONG-TERM EFFECTS.



**Addressing Root Causes**

WE NEED SOLUTIONS THAT ADDRESS UNDERLYING CAUSES, NOT JUST IMMEDIATE SYMPTOMS. THIS ENTAILS CHANGING VALUES & WORLDVIEWS AS WELL AS SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES.



**Cross-Sector Integration**

WE NEED SOLUTIONS THAT RECOGNIZE THE INTERCONNECTION OF OUR COMPLEX SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES. THIS ENTAILS WORKING ACROSS SECTORS AND SPECIALIZES ON INTEGRATIVE AND HOLISTIC SOLUTIONS.



**Stakeholder Collaboration**

WE NEED SOLUTIONS THAT ARE BOTH BOTTOM-UP AND TOP-DOWN; SOLUTIONS THAT ARE GUIDED BY A COMMON VISION, BUT TAILORED TO SPECIFIC CONTEXTS. THIS ENTAILS SOLUTIONS THAT ARE COLLABORATIVE IN NATURE, ENGAGING RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS.

Long-term solutions to complex social-environmental challenges require addressing the root causes of our interconnected problems. Underneath it all are: 1) systems/structures, and 2) mental modes. Changing systems and structures involves transforming the very social-economic organization of human communities around the world (policies, models, etc.), while changing mental modes involves transforming the values and worldviews that guide our civilizational systems/structures.

# CLAREMONT ECO FORUM



**“SOLUTIONS FOR AN ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION MUST COME FROM WITHIN. IT WILL REQUIRE UNPRECEDENTED COLLABORATION-- ALL OF US WORKING TOGETHER WITH A SHARED VISION FOR A BETTER TOMORROW.”**  
Wm. Andrew Schwartz  
Co-Founder, EcoCiv

We think an ecological civilization will emerge by working together. So rather than a series of one-sided lectures like most conferences, this year's international forum will involve two types of sessions: 1) plenary dialogues featuring panels of experts from around the world, and 2) small working group where all conference attendees will have a chance to contribute ideas on the vision, values, and structures needed to build an ecological civilization.

Each day will focus on a particular topic (law, economies, farming, education, communities) with the last day exploring the interconnection of all topics and lead by Youth. Scholars who want to share more formal presentations of their research are encouraged to submit papers and/or pre-recorded lectures to be uploaded to the conference website which will serve as a resource hub for those who want to know more about ecological civilization.

# DIALOGUE

14TH INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION  
3RD INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FORUM ON ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION



## Six days of international dialogue on the most important challenges we face

The Claremont Eco Forum (a.k.a. the International Forum on Ecological Civilization) continues to be one of the largest forums on ecological civilization in the world. Since 2006, this annual forum has drawn together a global cohort of creative academics, activists, artists, non-profit leaders, and governmental officials who are dedicated to rethinking our society toward an ecological civilization.

Participants are invited to contribute to creative solutions toward the long-term wellbeing of people and the planet! This year, we join together the 14th International Forum and 3rd International Youth Forum in fully online and 100% collaborative exploration on six themes:

- **DAY 1: POLITICS, LAW, & GOVERNANCE IN A WORLD THAT WORKS FOR ALL**
- **DAY 2: ECONOMIES FOR WELLBEING AND PLANETARY FLOURISHING**
- **DAY 3: FOOD AND FARMING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**
- **DAY 4: EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE**
- **DAY 5: COMMUNITIES AND CULTURES FOR THE COMMON GOOD**
- **DAY 6: YOUTH AND THE ECOLOGICAL GENERATION**

# OUR METHOD

## WHO ARE WE?

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### INTRODUCTIONS (10 MINUTES)

In your small groups, take turns introducing yourselves. You might consider answering questions like: What's your name? Where are you from? What is your occupation? Why are you attending this Eco Forum? What do you hope to gain from participating?

## WHERE ARE WE?

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### CONTEXTUALIZING (20 MINUTES)

Assess our current context with respect to the theme of the day (law, economies, farming, education, communities, etc). You might consider answering questions like: What problems do we face? What makes it a problem? Who is it a problem for? Why should we care about this problem? Are there any positive aspects of our current civilization we should retain in an ecological civilization?

## HOW DID WE GET HERE?

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### ASSESSING (30 MINUTES)

Identify and analyze the root causes of the problems described in the contextualizing stage above. You might consider answering questions like: Where are we now and how did we get here? What is the paradigm or narrative at play? What civilizational systems are at play? What policies, practices, and power dynamics are at play? What values and worldviews are at play? What philosophical assumptions are at play? What people and groups are driving forces?

## WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

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### VISIONING (30 MINUTES)

Outline a constructive vision for the future. Describe this alternative future (25, 50, or even 100 years out). You might consider answering questions like: If the problems described above were solved, what would the world look like? How would things be different? What are its features? What short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals might serve as milestones for success?

## HOW DO WE GET THERE?

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### ROADMAPPING (30 MINUTES)

Outline the way forward. Your roadmap should include a step-by-step plan for addressing the root causes (analyzing) of our current crisis (contextualizing), so we can reach our destination (visioning). You might consider answering questions like: What systems and structures are needed for an ecological civilization? What resources are needed? What values and worldviews should guide us? What allies are needed? Where do we go from here?

**The goal of this forum is to deepen and widen understanding about the kind of values, worldviews, policies, and actions needed to transition toward an ecological civilization. That entails getting to the root causes of our complex and interconnected social-environmental challenges, and building a new civilization around a life-affirming ecological paradigm for the long-term wellbeing of people and the planet.**

# DAY 1

## POLITICS, LAW, & GOVERNANCE IN A WORLD THAT WORKS FOR ALL

Political, legal, and governance structures provide the frame for the policies that dominate human social organization. We need a paradigm shift in law and politics if we are to advance policies for the wellbeing of people and the planet. What do political systems look like in an ecological civilization? Where have modern political models failed, and what transformations are required to build a world that works for all? What about the rights of nature? How can our legal paradigms be shifted to promote long-term social and environmental wellbeing?

**Who Are We?**  
Introductions  
(10 Minutes)

**Where Are We?**  
Contextualizing  
(20 Minutes)

**“When politics is too slow, change has to come from culture.” Al Gore**

**How Did We  
Get Here?**  
Assessing  
(30 Minutes)

**Where Do We  
Want to Go?**  
Visioning  
(30 Minutes)

**How Do We  
Get There?**  
Roadmapping  
(30 Minutes)

# DAY 2

## ECONOMICS FOR WELLBEING AND PLANETARY FLOURISHING

Our economic system is broken. Exploitation of people and the planet for profit and power has resulted in an unprecedented concentration of wealth. Unlimited growth and corporate rule cannot continue if we are to transition toward an ecological civilization. We need economies that serve people and the planet, promoting wellbeing within environmental limits. From issues like growth, ownership, environment, and more, consider the ways that sharing economies, circular economies, and other economic models can promote an ecological civilization.

**Who Are We?**  
Introductions  
(10 Minutes)

**Where Are We?**  
Contextualizing  
(20 Minutes)

**“We need an economy that is designed with the purpose of serving the wellbeing of people and the planet first and foremost; in doing so, it delivers social justice on a healthy planet.” WEAll**

**How Did We  
Get Here?**  
Assessing  
(30 Minutes)

**Where Do We  
Want to Go?**  
Visioning  
(30 Minutes)

**How Do We  
Get There?**  
Roadmapping  
(30 Minutes)

# DAY 3

## FOOD AND FARMING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Everyone needs to eat. Yet shortsighted industrialized farming and soil depletion put the wellbeing of future generations at risk. An ecological civilization requires regenerative agriculture systems that prioritize biodiversity and soil health so future generations can thrive. From ancient and indigenous practices, to polycultures, perennials, animals, and more, consider the most promising ways to feed the world for generations to come.

**Who Are We?**  
Introductions  
(10 Minutes)

**Where Are We?**  
Contextualizing  
(20 Minutes)

**“If governments won’t solve the climate, hunger, health, and democracy crisis, then the people will. Regenerative agriculture provides answers to the soil crisis, the food crisis, the health crisis, and the crisis of democracy.” Vandana Shiva**

**How Did We  
Get Here?**  
Assessing  
(30 Minutes)

**Where Do We  
Want to Go?**  
Visioning  
(30 Minutes)

**How Do We  
Get There?**  
Roadmapping  
(30 Minutes)

# DAY 4

## EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Life-affirming education is key to building an ecological civilization. We need a paradigm shift in education that cuts across disciplines and transcends value-free research in order to find solutions to complex social-environmental challenges. In short, we need education with a purpose. How can education contribute to human flourishing and the wellbeing of the world? How does a commitment to sustainability and social change the way teachers teach (pedagogy, curriculum, etc.)? Consider the core values and models of an education that promotes ecological civilization.

**Who Are We?**  
Introductions  
(10 Minutes)

**Where Are We?**  
Contextualizing  
(20 Minutes)

**“For successful education there must always be a certain freshness in the knowledge dealt with. It must be either new in itself or invested with some novelty of application to the new world of new times. Knowledge does not keep any better than fish” A.N. Whitehead**

**How Did We Get Here?**  
Assessing  
(30 Minutes)

**Where Do We Want to Go?**  
Visioning  
(30 Minutes)

**How Do We Get There?**  
Roadmapping  
(30 Minutes)

# DAY 5

## COMMUNITIES & CULTURES FOR THE COMMON GOOD

An ecological civilization will be built on the cornerstone of strong local communities capable of participating in global communities of communities. Yet violence and tribalism flow from the scarcity mindsets that separate “us” from “them.” Rethinking community and culture, belonging and identity, for peace, harmony, and the common good is fundamental to achieving an ecological civilization. What can indigenous cultures teach us about living together in harmony with one another and the Earth? What will cities look like in an ecological civilization? Consider the ways communities should be redesigned to promote the flourishing of life in all its forms.

**Who Are We?**  
Introductions  
(10 Minutes)

**Where Are We?**  
Contextualizing  
(20 Minutes)

**“The commons helps us see that we are actually richer than we thought we were. It’s just that our common wealth is not a private commodity or cash. It’s socially created wealth that’s embedded in distinct communities of interest who act as stewards of that wealth.” David Bollier**

**How Did We  
Get Here?**  
Assessing  
(30 Minutes)

**Where Do We  
Want to Go?**  
Visioning  
(30 Minutes)

**How Do We  
Get There?**  
Roadmapping  
(30 Minutes)

# DAY 6

## YOUTH AND THE ECOLOGICAL GENERATION

In many ways, the realization of an ecological civilization depends on the leadership of our youth. The very lives that will be most effected by social-environmental failure are also the voices most sensitive to need for systems change. How are social and environmental challenges interconnected? What does law and politics have to do with food and farming, with education, economies, or communities? If everything is interconnected, where does change begin? What can be done to better empower young people for leading the way toward ecological civilization?

**Who Are We?**  
Introductions  
(10 Minutes)

**Where Are We?**  
Contextualizing  
(20 Minutes)

**“We can’t save the world by playing by the rules, because the rules have to be changed. Everything needs to change – and it has to start today.” Greta Thunberg**

**How Did We Get Here?**  
Assessing  
(30 Minutes)

**Where Do We Want to Go?**  
Visioning  
(30 Minutes)

**How Do We Get There?**  
Roadmapping  
(30 Minutes)

# Special Thanks to Our Co-Sponsors



# CLAREMONT ECO FORUM

May 21-26, 2021 | 5:00-8:00pm (Pacific Time) | Fully Online

14<sup>th</sup> International Forum on Ecological Civilization and  
3<sup>rd</sup> International Youth Forum on Ecological Civilization

[www.claremontecoforum.org](http://www.claremontecoforum.org)



## THANKS FOR JOINING THE CONVERSATION!

### Organized By

