

## North American Permaculture Convergence: An idea whose time has come?

There has been talk off and on of holding a US national permaculture convergence for many years. There has never been a North American or US national pc convergence with the exception of the 2nd International Permaculture Convergence and Conference held in 1986 in Breitenbush Hot Springs, Oregon and Olympia, Washington respectively. This was a defacto US convergence/conference because the 700 attendees came from all around the US as well as from around the world. There are many national and regional convergences happening in other parts of the world including Australia, New Zealand, U.K., France, and other countries in Europe. There is also a European convergence. It is very typical of national or continental permaculture convergences to attract a smattering of permaculturists from other parts of the world.

**Proposal:** To create a North American permaculture convergence that happens every two years. The event rotates around North America and is hosted by already existing regional convergences. The N.A. convergence would bring together people from around the US and Canada and to a lesser extent, Mexico, due to language and border constraints. There have always been a lot of ties between US and Canadian permaculturists. The same is true but to a lesser extent for the ties between US and Mexican permaculturists. There have been MesoAmerican permaculture convergences held in the Spanish tongue.

If each of the ten regional convergences listed in this article took one turn each (if the national is held every other year) it would take 20 years to do one rotation. Of course by then, new regional convergences will have sprung up. At each N.A.P.C. the attendees can hear proposals by the regional groups willing to sponsor the next event and choose the one they think has the best offer. This is how the international pc convergence sites are chosen. This proposal means that the pc convergences are organized by the movement for the movement. The people doing the organizing have deep roots in the permaculture community.

Several years I floated a proposal on the national listserves about holding a national pc convergence. A few people responded but nothing happened. In late 2011 I again floated a proposal of a North American pc convergence with the possibility of it being hosted at the 2012 Northwest Permaculture Convergence. I was contacted by another group who indicated they were planning on organizing a national convergence and had conducted a survey of permaculturists around the US. They sounded credible so I retracted my offer of the Northwest pc convergence hosting a national in 2012. There is some information on this at one of the permies.com forums:

<http://www.permies.com/t/11004/permaculture/Interested-US-national-permaculture-convergence>

As I have not heard anything from this other organizing group for awhile I am floating the proposal to the wider permaculture community: to initiate a series of bi-annual North American permaculture convergences that would rotate between the already existing, pc convergences.

Anyone who has helped organize a regional permaculture convergence knows it takes a lot of work to put on a successful event. Adding a national component would require an even bigger effort. However there are a few economies of scale and additional help would come from outside the region.

HOW ABOUT 2013 ....?

A national convergence deserves some good lead time. David Jacke, for instance, told me that he would like a year and half notice. Would one of the pc regionals be willing to put something together for 2013? Any permaculture group which has a solid proposal should get it in the *Activist* and put it out on the

various national listserves.

WHO WANTS TO HELP? Of course, I assume that people from other parts of the continent would volunteer to help. Each regional group should have one or more people acting as liaisons to the national convergence.

Our Northwest NWPCC wasn't quite ready to host a national this year, but we are working up to that capacity. We expect 500 people to attend the 2012 Convergence on October 5-7 at Fort Flagler. Fantastic view over Puget Sound!

There are pros and cons to this proposal of rotating between regional convergences. There is a bit more of re-inventing the wheel. This can be helped if each team passes on some good written records and analysis and are available to give advice to the next team. It would make it harder for the napc to ossify since there would be new faces and perspectives each time. Multiple elements for single functions. Harder for special interests or bias to become entrenched.

One scenario is for a national organizing group to come together as well as the regional organizing group for the host bioregion. The national group could help maintain more continuity. Who knows what is going to happen. Who is interested in helping evolve a North American permaculture convergence? I am willing to collate names and offers to start with. An email listserve will most likely evolve out of that.

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Here is a list of current, ongoing regional convergences that I know about with their 2012 dates.

\* Northeast US. 8th Northeastern Permaculture Convergence,  
July 13-15<sup>th</sup>. <http://northeastconvergence.wordpress.com/>

\* Southeast US, 19th Southeastern Permaculture Gathering  
August 3-5, Celo NC. <http://www.southeasternpermaculture.org/>

\* Midwest. 3rd Simply Living Fair & Midwest Permaculture Convergence, Bloomington, Indiana, especially serving the Ohio River Valley. <http://simplylivingfair.org/>  
There is also lots of activity in the upper Midwest so a regional convergence is likely to gell there within few years.

\* Colorado. 6<sup>th</sup> Colorado Permaculture Convergence,  
<http://www.coloradopermaculture.com/>

\* Southwest: Southwest Drylands Permaculture Gathering. The Southwest pc community has a lot of deep roots and has held convergences off and on for many years.

\* California: 8th Bay Area Permaculture Convergence  
Their 7<sup>th</sup> happened in Bolinas, at the Regenerative Design Institute on July 2-3 2011.  
[http://www.livingmandala.com/Living\\_Mandala/Bay\\_Area\\_Permaculture\\_Convergence\\_2011.html](http://www.livingmandala.com/Living_Mandala/Bay_Area_Permaculture_Convergence_2011.html)

\* California: Southern California Permaculture Convergence.

\* Pacific Northwest, 5<sup>th</sup> Northwest Permaculture Convergence. October 5-7. Fort Flagler State Park, <http://nwpermaculture.com/>

\* Inland Northwest. 2<sup>nd</sup> Inland Northwest Permaculture Conference, November 9-11, Missoula Montana. <http://inlandnorthwestpermaculture.com>

\* Western Canada, 1<sup>st</sup> Western Canada Permaculture Convergence, August 24 - 26, Millarville, ALBERTA  
<http://abconvergence2012.eventbrite.com/>

\* 4<sup>th</sup> West Coast Women's Permaculture Gathering, Ashland, Oregon, September 21-23  
<http://westcoastwomenspc.weebly.com/>

Mesoamerican Permaculture Convergence at Lake Atitlan in Guatemala was held 2006

The 1<sup>st</sup> Latin American Permaculture Congress was held in 2000 in Argentina. I don't see any record of subsequent ones on the internet. I

\* What other pc convergences are happening? The list is sure to grow.

I would like to point out that the 11<sup>th</sup> North American Bioregional Congress will be held in August 2013 at Trillium Community in the Applegate Valley of southwest Oregon. NABC has traditionally had a strong permaculture contingent.

Did you hear the news that the 11th International Permaculture Convergence and Conference will be held in Cuba in 2013? Hosted by the National Permaculture Institute of Cuba.  
<http://www.facebook.com/events/174745245968086/?ref=nf>

If you are interested in this sort of thing, here is the url of an article I wrote:

A HISTORY OF PERMACULTURE GATHERINGS HELD IN THE UNITED STATES & CANADA  
<http://www.inlandnorthwestpermaculture.com/content/history-permaculture-gatherings-held-united-states-canada>