

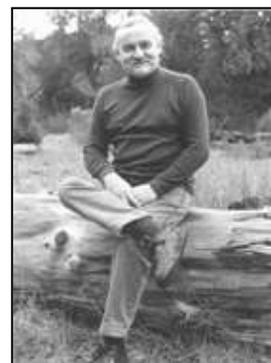
Planet Drum Foundation *est. 1973*



“The concept of a bioregion is proving to be a practical tool that can communicate older concerns in contemporary terms. It represents a life-raft for survival and a new basis for alliances between land-based groups to counter a rising tide of global monoculture.” (Envisioning Sustainability, Berg, 146)

Peter Berg (1937-2011)

Peter Berg was a visionary activist who dedicated his life to the development and implementation of bioregionalism. Born on October 1, 1937 in Long Island, New York, Berg grew up in Florida, eventually earning a scholarship to the University of Florida for psychology. Inspired by a passion for civil rights, Berg left Florida and headed to San Francisco to participate in the Beat Movement at the age of seventeen. In 1964, Berg became a central figure in the San Francisco Mime Troupe, and coined the term “guerilla theatre” for the group which sought to evoke social change via radical performances. Then, in 1966, with the goal of exemplifying the concept of freedom within the community and “creating the condition they describe”, Berg and fellow performers established The Diggers. This group was a key factor in developing ecological awareness both in the San Francisco Bay Area and within the left-wing movement. Berg created Planet Drum Foundation (PD) in 1973 and began to define and explore the parameters of bioregionalism. In 1998, Peter Berg was awarded the Gerbode Professional Development Program Fellowship for notable non-profit executives. In 2005 he spoke at the UN World Environment Day conference and in 2008 at the Ecocity World Summit. To recognize Berg’s lifetime of dedication to bioregionalism, the city of San Francisco declared October 1, 2011 Peter Berg Day.



Peter Berg, 2010



Digger Poster

The Roots

- **1966** - As a founder of the San Francisco Diggers Berg began to develop his ecological perspective. The Diggers distributed a series of pamphlets aimed at eliciting social change on the basis that everything in society should be free. The focus of this outreach later included an ecological emphasis which began with Berg's free broadsides entitled 'Planetedge Papers' which calls the public "out of the world and onto the planet!" (*Envisioning Sustainability*, Berg, 36)
- **1972** - Berg pursues a political and cultural direction for bioregional concept at the United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm, Sweden. Along with tens of thousands of grassroots activists from around the world, he discovered that the UN's function as a government-to-government body hindered it from being able to respond adequately to the growing, grassroots sense of environmental crisis sweeping the globe.
- **1973** - Berg establishes PD in order to address the shortcomings of the traditional environmental conservation approach. Previously, the concept of environmentalism separated the roles of human beings and the wildness of nature. Berg, on the other hand, recognized the coexistence of these two realms as a crucial element in the progress of the environmental movement. His goal was to "...develop a place-located ecological philosophy and movement to restore bioregions that could eventually replace the disinhaboratory view of industrialization." (*Envisioning Sustainability*, Berg, 51)
- **1999** - Berg is invited to visit Bahía de Caráquez, Ecuador to organize community support for the First International Mangrove Day and share his ecological outlook after a series of natural disasters leaves the city in shambles.
- **February 23rd, 1999** - Bahía de Caráquez declared itself an ecological city with by-laws for reducing negative human impacts and promoting positive human activities with the help of local organizations.



Bahía Ecociudad Logo

What is a Bioregion?

A bioregion is defined by the unique natural characteristics that occur throughout a particular geographic area, such as climate, landforms, watersheds, soils, and native plants and animals. Each bioregion also includes the human interactions, both positive and negative, with the local environment. Bioregionalism is a philosophy for reestablishing the balance of human activities and the environment. It seeks to find unique solutions for basic human necessities (food, water, shelter, energy, and transportation) in every bioregion.

- A distinct area where the conditions that influence life are similar.
- The extent of a bioregion is determined by using climatology, physiography, animal and plant geography, natural history, other descriptive natural sciences, and the history of sustainable indigenous cultures of the place.
- A geographical terrain and a terrain of consciousness.
- Establishes a framework for the concept of “living-in-place.” This practice involves following the necessities and pleasures of life as they are uniquely presented by a particular site, and evolving ways to ensure long-term occupancy at that site.
- Emphasizes the need for a balance between human lives, other living things, and the processes of the planet, while opposing the current methodology which relies upon short term destructive exploitation of land and life.

Goals of a Bioregional Approach

- Maintain and restore natural systems.
- Develop sustainable means for satisfying basic human needs such as food, water, energy, shelter, resource materials, waste handling, and cultural information.
- Create and support a broad range of activities which make it possible to fit better into the life-place.

- Find ways to allow the wildness of nature to coexist with human activity.

The Central Issue

- Global Monoculture is the view that humanity and the planet offer only slightly varying set of activities and expectations thus creating universal homogeneity.
 - This causes the manipulation and exploitation of natural systems.
Ex.: Sameness in diet, clothes, transportation, architecture; business suits in Indonesia and hamburgers in New Delhi.

Bahía de Caráquez, Ecuador

In 1998, the city was struck by two natural disasters: heavy rainfall and resulting mudslides from an El Niño Phenomenon and a 7.2 magnitude earthquake. The hardest hit neighborhood, Maria Auxilladora, located near the Cross in Bahía, suffered 16 deaths and the destruction of approximately 30 homes located on an entire hillside. Over the course of ten years, PD has made this site a focus of revegetation efforts. With a goal of stabilizing the ground soil and reducing erosion to prevent further destruction, volunteers have planted hundreds of trees of both fruit and wood varieties.

Following an increase in volunteer interest and funding, PD's initial revegetation site '*El Bosque en Medio de las Ruinas*' ('The Forest Amidst the Ruins') in María Auxilladora, now an official city park, evolved into a larger scale effort at restoration of the Dry Tropical Forest ecosystem. It includes critically vulnerable hillsides in an eight kilometer corridor from Bahía along the Rio Chone watershed and estuary. Currently, PD operates a plant nursery at a local university and produces thousands of trees representing over twenty different native species. This work is a model for Dry Tropical Forest and other revegetation projects. One of PD's goals is to teach others how to replicate this process.

In addition to PD's revegetation project, there is also a Bioregional Educational Program which was initiated in 2005. Since then, eight different

teachers have been trained and conducted classes for schoolchildren at five different local educational institutions. The curriculum and class materials were entirely prepared by PD staff and volunteers with a focus on the unique bioregional features of Bahía and surrounding areas. This program is a model for creating increased bioregional awareness among local youth.

In February 1999, Bahía declared itself an Ecological City. It created and passed by-laws which promote positive ecological activities. PD has been an integral part of the Bahía Eco-city movement from the beginning. This work includes providing technical assistance, planning ideas, and community outreach. PD is a member of the committee for developing Eco-city activities and continues to work with the local government and other environmental organizations in maintaining these efforts. As of May 2012, the government of Bahía is re-developing a garbage separation system as just one of many projected programs.

Additionally, in 2005 PD extended its role in the region with the purchase of 150 acres of semi-wild Dry Tropical Forest thirty minutes outside of Bahía with the intent to establish a Bioregional Sustainability Institute. PD's plan is to use the land as a field laboratory where students can learn bioregional approaches to sustainability practices. Areas of study include restoring natural systems, restoring sustainable ways to satisfy basic human needs, bioregional education, community involvement, place-located culture, and Spanish language studies. Students are encouraged to develop personal projects that take advantage of this unique environment.



Orlando Arias, Planet Drum Field Foreman teaches local children how to plant trees in the 'Bosque en Medio de las Ruinas' inner-city, wild park.

Photo by Clay Plager-Unger, January, 2012.

Planet Drum in San Francisco

The PD headquarters is located in a working-class, Victorian house at the confluence of three neighborhoods – Noe Valley, the Mission, and Glen Park – in San Francisco. It provides resources for groups and individuals pursuing historical and current information about sustainability and bioregional theory and practice. The office is the nexus of the organization’s communications and work and has the following functions:



*Planet Drum office in San Francisco.
Photo by Philip Woodard, May, 2012.*

- Maintains an extensive library of bioregional literature, historical documents and PD archival materials.
- Manages listings of sustainability-oriented and ecological events, activities, and volunteer opportunities in the Bay Area on the Green City Calendar available through the website.
- Hosts fieldtrips with students and adults to explore the natural systems and distinct ecological characteristics of particular sites.
- Publishes the PULSE, a semi-annual newsletter comprised of essays, bioregional reports, and updates on PD activities.
- Publishes books, maps, and “bundles” – packets of information for distinct areas that focus on bioregional characteristics.
- Supports various bioregional events such as cultural happenings, workshops, classes and festivals.
- Maintains gardens in front of the office with California native plants and ripped up cement from the sidewalk along the side of the office to create the oldest and longest sidewalk native plant garden in the city.
- Directs fundraising initiatives to provide fiscal support to all PD projects.

Planet Drum Team Past and Present

- Field Projects Managers in Bahía:
 - 2000 – Carey Knecht (US)
 - 2002 – Jeff Goddin (US)
 - 2003 – Brian Teinert (US)
 - 2004 – Renée Portanova (US)
 - 2005 – Heather Crawford (Jamaica)
 - 2006 – Patrick Wylie (Canada)
 - 2007 – Present – Clay Plager-Unger (US)

- Bioregional Education Program Teachers in Bahia:
 - 2005 – Kristen Lansdale (US)
 - 2006 – Valentina Carminati (Italy) & Ramon Cedeño (Ecuador)
 - 2007 – Ramon Cedeño
 - 2008 – Ramon Cedeño
 - 2009 – Ramon Cedeño, Paola Devita (US), & Fabiola Coello (Ecuador)
 - 2010 – Ramon Cedeño, Margarita Avila (Ecuador), & Nadine Flexhaug (Canada)
 - 2011 – Ramon Cedeño, Margarita Avila, & David Villareal (Ecuador)

- Current Staff in San Francisco:
 - Judy Goldhaft was named Director of Planet Drum Foundation by the board of directors in October, 2011. She had served as Managing Director since PD's founding in 1973.
 - Jean Lindgren – Grant Writer
 - Philip Woodard – PULSE Editor and Green City Calendar Manager
 - Eric Noble – Webmaster
 - Ben Stone- Francisco – Education Outreach Manager
 - Matthew Switzer – Membership Outreach Manager

Suggested Further Reading

- **Peter Berg**

- Biography of Peter Berg
<http://planet-drum.net/2012/03/11/biographical-entry/>
- Bioregionalism Comes to Japan: An Interview with Peter Berg
<http://www.sustainable-city.org/intervws/berg.htm>
- Proclamation: Peter Berg Day (October 11, 2011)
<http://planet-drum.net/2011/03/07/proclamation/>
- Compilation of Books, Presentations, and Other Materials
http://www.planetdrum.org/Peter_Berg_writings_index.htm
- Remembering Peter Berg
<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/aug/21/local/la-me-peter-berg-20110821>
<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/08/13/BAS51KM6HJ.DTL>

- **Bioregionalism**

- *Envisioning Sustainability* by Peter Berg, 2009
- “Amble Toward Continental Congress”
<http://www.planetdrum.org/amble.htm>
- “Bioregion and Human Location”
http://www.planetdrum.org/bioregion_and_human_location.htm
- “Bioregional Approach for Making Sustainable Cities”
http://www.planetdrum.org/bioreg_approach_cities.htm
- “Bioregionalism Meets Local Autonomy in Mexico”
http://www.planetdrum.org/tibg_mex.html
- Copenhagen 2009 Reports
http://www.planetdrum.org/Copenhagen09_David%20Simpson_.htm#Copenhagen_2009_Reports
- “Green City as a Thriving City”
http://www.planetdrum.org/green_thriving.htm
- “I am Looking at a Picture of Home”
<http://www.planetdrum.org/dasmann.htm#top>
- “Learning to Partner with a Life-Place”
http://www.planetdrum.org/Learning_to_Partner...Place.htm
- “A Metamorphosis for Cities: From Gray to Green”

http://www.planetdrum.org/metamorphosis_for_cities.htm

- “The Post-Environmentalist Directions of Bioregionalism”
<http://www.planetdrum.org/Post-Enviro.htm>

- **Planet Drum Land**

- “A School to Retrieve the Future”
http://www.planetdrum.org/ecuador_2010.htm#Top

- **Volunteering**

- <http://www.planetdrum.org/volunteerbahia.htm>

- **Bahía Eco-city**

- “Viviendo en Bahía Ecociudad - Guía para Eco Ciudadanos”
<http://www.guacamayotours.com/assets/reciclaje.pdf>
- “National Transformation Can Inspire Local Progress”
http://www.planetdrum.org/ecuador_2008.htm#NationalTransformation

The Informational Planet Drum Video, filmed in early 2011, can be viewed on the Planet Drum homepage at <http://www.planetdrum.org/>.



Elizabeth planting a tree at the 2012 ‘El Toro’ revegetation site.

Photo by Clay Plager-Unger, January, 2012.

Compiled April, 2012 by Elizabeth Jahp, volunteer from December, 2011 through April, 2012.