

# A HISTORY OF PERMACULTURE GATHERINGS HELD IN THE UNITED STATES & CANADA



Compiled by Michael Pilarski

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Here is a history of permaculture gatherings in the USA and IPCs.

The following list of permaculture gatherings, convergences and conferences was obtained by going through the calendar sections of 40 out of 73 issues of the Permaculture Activist. Combined with a bit of internet research. This is not a definitive list. Going through the 33 other issues will add more (which I plan to do some day if no-one beats me to it). A very few non-permaculture events are included because they are closely related. In most cases, I give the date, the name of the event, the location and the name of the contact person/center. There is also a section at the end for the international and continental convergences.

I compiled this list as a bit of history for the overall movement. Some of you may be interested. Some of you may be totally bored. It gives us an indication of where permaculture has been most active over the years.

Please send in information on other permaculture gatherings to make this list more comprehensive.

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August 4-7, 1986, 2<sup>nd</sup> International Permaculture Consultants Convergence, Breitenbush Hot Springs, Oregon.

August 8-10, 1986, 2<sup>nd</sup> International Permaculture Conference. The Evergreen State College, Olympia Washington. 700 people attended from around the world and around the USA.

November 1989 to March 1990 (to be held sometime between). North American Permaculture Designer's Gathering. Location to be announced. This appeared in the May 1989 Activist. Sue Colpas-Ross at Nobody's Mountain, TN was the contact person. Did this ever happen?

October 11-13, 1991, 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Eastern Permaculture Conference. Standing Stone State Park, Tennessee. Earth Advocates. This means it must have started in 1986.

March 14-16, 1992, Northwest Permaculture Teachers Reunion. Gearhart, Oregon. Jude Hobbs.

October 9-12, 1992, 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Eastern Permaculture Conference, Central New England, David Jacke.

October 8-10, 1993, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Eastern Permaculture Conference, Butler, Pennsylvania, John Irwin.

June 24-26, 1994, West Coast Permaculture Convergence. Orleans, California, Sandy Bar Ranch.

July 29-31, 1994, 1st Annual Southeastern Permaculture Gathering. Celo, North Carolina. Chuck Marsh.

September 26- Oct 1, 1994, Permaculture Designer's Convergence for Eastern North America, Amesville, Ohio, David Jacke.

June 24-26, 1995, 2<sup>nd</sup> West Coast Permaculture Convergence, Orleans, California, Sandy Bar Ranch.

July 28-30, 1995, 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Pacific Northwest Permaculture Rendezvous and Orcas Island Bog Toss. Orcas Island, Washington, Michael Pilarski.

August 11-13, 1995, 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Southeastern Permaculture Gathering. Celo, North Carolina. Gred Gross.

September 4-9, 1996, Eastern Permaculture Convergence. Almonte, Ontario, Maureen McEown.

June 20-23, 1996, 3<sup>rd</sup> annual West Coast Permaculture Convergence. Orleans, California. Sandy Bar Ranch.

August 8-11, 1996, 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Southeastern Permaculture Summer Gathering. Celo, North Carolina. Tony Kleese.

August 16-18, 1996. 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Pacific Northwest Permaculture Rendezvous and Bog Toss. Orcas Island, Washington, Michael Pilarski.

August 30-September 1, 1996, 10-year Reunion of the Central Rocky Mountain Permaculture Institute,. Basalt Colorado. CRMPI.

July 18-20, 1997. 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Pacific Northwest Permaculture Rendezvous, Orcas Island, Washington, Michael Pilarski.

August 7-10, 1997, 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Permaculture Summer Gathering. Chuck Marsh.

October 10-13, 1997, 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Lost Valley Permaculture Reunion. Dexter, Oregon. Lost Valley Center.

March 14-15, 1998, Eastern Permaculture Teacher's Association Gathering. Freeland, Maryland, Heathcote Center.

August 7-9, 1998, 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Southeastern Permaculture Gathering. Celo, North Carolina, Chuck Marsh.

August 21-23, 1998, Permaculture Gathering, Quebec, Canada. Terra Flora.

October 10-11, 1998, Eastern Permaculture Teacher's Association Gathering. Freeland, Maryland, Linda Felch.

June 6-12, 1999, Natural Building & Permaculture Convergence. Taos, NM, Permaculture Drylands Institute.

July 30-August 1, 1999, 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Southeastern Permaculture Gathering. Celo, NC, Tony Kleese.

September 24-26, 1999, Northwest Permaculture Gathering, Dexter, Oregon, Lost Valley Center.

June 25-July 2, 2000, "Build Here Now" Natural Building and Permaculture Convergence. Taos, NM, Lama Foundation.

July 14-16, 2000, Orcas Island Permaculture Rendezvous & Bog-Toss. Orcas Island, Washington, Michael Lockman.

August 3-6, 2000, 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Southeastern Permaculture Gathering. Celo, NC, Tony Kleese.

September 22-24, 2000, 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Oregon Permaculture Gathering. Dexter, Oregon. Lost Valley Center.

September 21-23, 2001, 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Oregon Permaculture Gathering. Dexter, Oregon. Lost Valley Center.

August 2-5, 2001, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Southeastern Permaculture Gathering. Black Mountain, NC. Earthhaven Village.

August 16-18, 2001, Skill Sharing & Permaculture Convergence. Williams, Oregon. Seven Seeds Farm.

August 5-8, 2004, 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Southeastern Permaculture Gathering. Black Mountain, NC. Earthhaven Village.

May 21-30, 2004, Village Building Convergence, Portland, Oregon. City Repair Project. (not specifically permaculture, but permaculture has always had a strong role.)

June 13-20, 2004, "Build Here Now" Natural Building Convergence. Taos, NM, Lama Foundation. [note that this year this gathering did not include permaculture in its title.]

July 9-17, 2005. 9<sup>th</sup> Continental Bioregional Congress. Black Mountain, NC, Earthhaven Village. [The Bioregional Congresses have always had a strong showing of permaculturists. This one was hosted at a prominent permaculture ecovillage.]

March 10-11, 2006, Permaculture Convergence, Occidental, California.

July 25-27, 2008, 5th Bay Area Regional Permaculture Convergence, West Sonoma County, California. This means it started in 2004.

[http://www.livingmandala.com/Living\\_Mandala/Bay\\_Area\\_Permaculture\\_Convergence.html](http://www.livingmandala.com/Living_Mandala/Bay_Area_Permaculture_Convergence.html)

August 2-3, 2008, Permaculture Convergence, Boulder, Colorado, Living Earth Center.

August 29-31, 2008, 1st Annual Southern California Permaculture Convergence, Santa Barbara Permaculture Network.

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

August 29-September 1, 2008, Southwest Drylands & Southern California Permaculture Convergence. New Cuyama, California. Quail Springs.

September 12-14, 2008. 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Washington State Permaculture Convergence, Belfair, Washington, Michael Pilarski.

January 24-25, 2009. Hawaiian Islands Permaculture Convergence, Hawi, Big Island, Uluwehi Farm & Nursery.

July 3-5, 2009, 5<sup>th</sup> Northeast Permaculture Network Summer Convergence, East Montpelier, Vermont. <http://northeasternpermaculture.wikispaces.com/Summer+Gathering>

Aug 25-27, 2009 - 10th Annual Northwest Permaculture and Bioregional Gathering, Eugene, Oregon, Dharmalaya Center.

September 18-20, 2009, 2nd Annual Washington State Permaculture Convergence, Belfair, Washington, Christy Nieto.

## ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

August 30-September 10, 1994, 3<sup>rd</sup> European Permaculture Convergence, Germany.

May 16-19, 1996. 4<sup>th</sup> European Permaculture Conference. Turrets sur Loup, France.

March 27-April 4, 2000, 1<sup>st</sup> Latin American Permaculture Congress. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

November 13-15, 2004, International Ecovillage Designers Conference. Maleny, Queensland, Australia, Max Lindegger.

July 7-12, 2001, 6<sup>th</sup> European Permaculture Conference, Vrable, Slovakia. Permaculture Institute of Europe.

March 20-25, 2008. 9<sup>th</sup> Australian Permaculture Convergence, Sydney, NSW, Australia. Celebrating 30 years of permaculture.

[www.apc9.org.au](http://www.apc9.org.au)

August 21-23, 2009, Festival de Permaculture 2009. Sambourg, France.

2010. 10th Australian Permaculture Convergence. Cairns, Tropical Far North Queensland.

[Richard Archer in a recent post from Australia said “In Australia there are many small grass-roots organizations but no national body. The grass-roots orgs are generally specific to a local area, they run PDCs and members help each other out with permie projects. There is not a whole lot of interaction between groups.”

I think that not everyone in Australia would share Archer’s assessment. The Australian permaculturists have held a major national convergence every few years since 1986. I attended the APC in 1995 in Adelaide. It was a great convergence with hundreds of permaculture people from all around Australia. It was evidence of a vibrant permaculture movement with a lot of interconnections.]

Locations of the IPC’s (International Permaculture Convergence and Conference)

The convergence is for design course graduates only and precedes the public conference.

IPC 1, 1984, Pappinbarra and Rowlands, NSW, Australia.

IPC 2, 1986, Breitenbush, Oregon and Olympia, Washington.

IPC 3, 1989, South Island and North Island, New Zealand.

IPC 4, 1991, Biratnagar and Kathmandu, Nepal.

IPC 5, 1993, Gerlesborg (Sweden) and Copenhagen (Denmark).

IPC 6, 1996, Bridgetown and Perth, Western Australia.

IPC 7, 2005, Slovenia and Motovun, Croatia.

IPC 8, 2007, Pirenopoli and Sao Paulos, Brazil, [www.ipc8.org](http://www.ipc8.org)

IPC 9, October, 2009. Malawi, Africa. [www.ipcon.org](http://www.ipcon.org)

IPC X, September, 2011. Jordan, Middle East Their website is not up as of 12/28/10.

IPC XI, Cuba? The 2011 location was a toss-up between Jordan and Cuba. The Cuban permaculture movement has stated their desire to host IPC XI.

# Scales of Permaculture Gatherings



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Here is a letter I wrote in early 2010 during an email discussion about convening a National Permaculture Convergence in the US. (slightly revised for this website article)

I recognize that there is a lot of carbon footprint in a national gathering and so it should aim to be a really good one to be worth it. Something not to be rushed into lightly.

## **Scales in permaculture gatherings:**

- A.** The individual permaculturists and small groups such as communities, cooperatives, businesses.
- B.** Local permaculture clubs at the neighborhood and town level.
- C.** Larger permaculture organizations (formal and informal) at the metropolitan level and, county or sub-state level.
- D.** Statewide or regional convergences, such as the Northeastern North American Convergence, the Southeastern Permaculture Gathering, and the Northwest Permaculture Convergence.
- E.** National gatherings. For instance, the Australians have had a national permaculture gathering every two years since about 1985. I attended one in Adelaide, South Australia and it was big, well organized and a great time. They still continue.
- F.** Continental permaculture convergences. Sort of like the North American Bioregional Congress. You are probably all aware that permaculture and the bioregional congresses have always gone hand in hand. There has been at least one continental permaculture convergence for South America.
- G.** International Permaculture Conference and Convergence. They have been held periodically since 1984. They have been at longer frequencies the last couple decades. I participated in IPC II, III and IV and they were wonderful events with a lot of cross pollination, (Washington State, New Zealand, and Nepal respectively). They have been also been held in Denmark, Perth, Australia, Slovenia/Croatia, Brazil, and the latest in Malawi and South Africa. The next is scheduled for Jordan in the Middle East. Cuba is a likely location for the one after that.

Each of these scales has its place and purpose. Of course people will get together more frequently at the lower ends of the scale. Each scale up, people have to travel further. There is more carbon footprint. Fewer people can go. They happen less often.

Gatherings and festivals are one of the most important parts of being human. Particularly when it is a gathering of your own “culture” or subculture. You feel safe there and belong. People from the same profession getting together is inspiring, empowering and

offers a way to exchange information and make connections that can never be achieved via internet or technology.

I am thrilled by every local and regional permaculture gathering in the US, or anywhere in the world. That is where the main action is. But some national and international gatherings are good too. Permaculture is about localization and decentralization, but we can still talk to one another. If we ever have a national US permaculture gathering (or better yet North American) I will encourage our region's representatives to go by train.

Email and the internet are not benign. Technology has a footprint as well. I do use the internet some and find it useful. But I am not putting all my eggs in that basket. I applaud every permaculture listserves, website, Facebook, meetup group, twitter, ning, etc. It is all great, but just remember it could all disappear one day, or parts of it piecemeal, or restricted public access.

This is one reason I believe it is good and necessary for permaculture gatherings to happen at all scales. Face to face encounters, building lines of communication that can be strengthened by technology, but that are not dependent on it. Always have multiple elements for single functions, e.g. communication.

Okay, so while I do agree that a US national permaculture gathering doesn't seem like a good idea for 2010. I'd still like to make a positive suggestion for what to do next.

I suggest that each 2010 regional permaculture gathering have a short discussion about a national gathering. Does any region want to host a national event at some point in the future? Who would like to go? Perhaps there could be a think tank of one person each from the various regions.

Putting on a national event would require a very good team (in fact it is required at all scales). Event organizers who are very capable, very friendly, very tactful and not full of ego. Every movement has its difficult personalities. There are even some nice people who don't get along. All in all, my experience has been that permaculture is full of (mainly) really nice people. It is usually possible to integrate a few egotists or combative people into a group event, but you don't want the event run by them.

Who knows how long that cheap, fast transportation will be available. An economic collapse or suchlike would drastically affect our running around going to gatherings; however even if travel gets harder I expect a lot of human ingenuity and we will continue to have gatherings.

Let me know if anyone wants to organize a national or a west coast convergence.

Have a good time at all your permaculture events!

Permacordially

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