



# Metta Earth Prospectus

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Metta Earth is a cultural renewal project rejuvenating interconnection between people, animals, agriculture, and nature.

## Metta Earth

In Pali, a language similar to Sanskrit, “metta” means compassion or loving-kindness.  
Metta Earth is compassion for Earth.



## Metta Prayer

May all beings be peaceful.  
May all beings be happy.  
May all beings be safe.  
May all beings awaken  
to the light of their true nature.  
May all beings be free.

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We welcome activists, educators, farmers, permaculturists, yoga practitioners, donors, investors, future residents, and others to co-create in the next phases of Metta Earth to respond to the global challenges of our time.

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## The Call

“We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny.”

### Earth Charter Preamble

People around the world are engaged in social, environmental, and spiritual processes that are striving to create long-term thriving between human societies and the natural world that sustains us.

At Metta Earth, we are actively joining this movement as a cultural renewal project re-juvenating interconnection between people, animals, agriculture, and nature.

We are grounded in the knowledge that nature is a living and communicative presence and a deep intelligence resides in all life. Our intent at Metta Earth is to cultivate a strong listening to the elements of the Earth innovating solutions that support ecological sustainability.

As economic, political, and environmental systems become precarious, we are reaching for and designing alternative models with particular focus on the gift economy, intergenerational community, cooperative agriculture, and contemplative practice.

Our challenge is to bridge, translate, and integrate the best systems available to us. In the Great Turning, as Joanna Macy calls these pivotal times, we are a culture in transition.

## Our Story

Gillian Kapteyn Comstock and Russell Comstock are the founders, present owners, and stewards of Metta Earth. Long time communitarians influenced by Quaker values, they have taken up the directing and leadership of the Metta Earth project. As the design of the next phase unfolds, they are ready and eager to share this leadership more fully.

**T**heir love of the circle is great, and they deeply recognize that the next evolutionary necessity is the movement from ego to eco consciousness, and from directive leading to leading from the mysterious center of the circle. The dance has been to guide and lead, yet honor the vibrancy and diversity of community participation. They look for every opportunity to give way to the communal heart.

Gillian and Russell have been life companions for more than 30 years and are parents to three adult children and 4 grandchildren. Through many strong chapters of homesteading and community living, they have continually

returned to the wild places, gardens, and sanctuaries of nature as guides supporting others in deep connection with life and Earth.

For nearly ten years, they have grounded their work in the daily rhythm of growing food, farming, teaching, and cultivating strong roots with the Metta Earth land. Their joy is sharing the gifts of place with others through teaching about regenerative food systems, contemplative practices, and community processes.

The circle of Metta Earth is ever growing with residents, team members, and program participants.



“The land and the team provide so much sanctuary for participants that personal transformations arise naturally. Russell and Gillian offer two extremely powerful and unique perspectives on living and learning, complementing each other and the training group with extraordinary flow. Transparency in leadership qualities and a cornucopia of giving experiences create fertile ground to grow. They are gently and persistently pushing the boundaries to a whole new level that this planet desperately needs.”

**Wilderness & Ecopsychology participant**

## Vision

Metta Earth, a center for contemplative ecology, focuses on ecologically sustainable agriculture, renewable technologies, and a simple, meditative life.

Contemplative ecology is a notion that enlightenment is not liberation from the senses and the body, but rather a deep embodiment of the sacred in daily life. This process challenges us to awaken to the luminous, although sometimes hidden nature of the moment, and that nature itself is our greatest teacher. We look to the web of life and ecological consciousness to see vibrant presence permeating all life.

Rather than go about business as usual, Metta Earth is a sanctuary designed to nourish, protect, and allow seedling ideas to grow. We are interested in shifts of thinking and emergent consciousness. This is a place in service to all who would like to come and be nourished, to explore, and to inquire. As we learn to care mindfully for ourselves and our surroundings, we are better able to reinvigorate societal processes and refresh culture.

Grounding this study, growing food has become an essential foundation for a healing relationship to land. We are committed to gardening, farming, and permaculture design as a way to bring health and resilience to the sourcing of food.

*We offer community, refuge for individuals, a nucleus of social innovation, and a possible model in the world for all to engage with.*

We have originated three intertwining entities to support our vision of cultural renewal. This prospectus describes these organizations and the work of the past ten years. We invite you to join in the next evolution of:

- Metta Earth Institute
- Metta Earth Farm, and
- Metta Earth Community




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In a time when climate change is accelerating and social systems are collapsing, we practice awareness of the exquisite presence of nature to strengthen our capacity to be protectors of Earth.

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## Land Design

Metta Earth is located in Lincoln, Vermont at the edge of the Green Mountain National Forest on an alpine plateau renowned for its extraordinary beauty and energetically charged landscape.

With 158 beautiful acres, Metta Earth is nestled in a bowl of mountains with stunning views in all directions. Meadows, pasture land, and horticultural fields are interspersed with hardwood and evergreen forest, old orchards, stonewalls, seasonal streams, and an enormous variety of wildlife habitat. Walking and hiking places abound, and a magnificent, pure river with clear pools and waterfalls is just a short walk down the road.

Metta Earth has been designed with five zones, each with a different purpose. Plenitude and Quietude are designated as residential zones, whereas Interlude/Solitude, Gratitude, and Infinitude are designated as community-use zones. Shares are purchased to allow for greater community participation, ownership, and stewardship of the land.

### Metta Earth Zones of Use

#### Interlude/Solitude

Future Main Site of Metta Earth Institute  
MEI Hermitage Site

#### Infinitude

Green Burial Ground

#### Plenitude

Metta Earth Farm  
Metta Earth Community Residences

#### Gratitude

Metta Earth Community Common House  
Metta Earth Institute Event Site

#### Quietude

Metta Earth Community Residences



Map by Janet Fredericks

## Entity Design

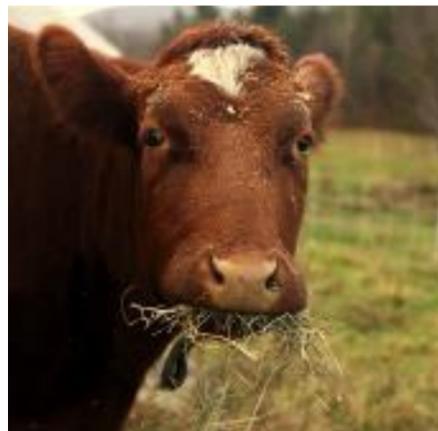
### Metta Earth, Inc.

Metta Earth, Inc. is an overarching organization providing commonly applicable governance for the three other entities (MEI, MEF, MEC). Located on the 158 acre property in Lincoln, Vermont, Metta Earth, Inc. holds the whole land in perpetuity creating a refuge for people to learn and live in ecologically thrivable ways on the land.



Metta Earth Institute, Inc.  
MEI

is a small non-profit, tax exempt, 501c3 educational, retreat center based on the land currently in the zone called, "Gratitude". Focusing on aspects of contemplative ecology, MEI offers retreats, trainings, programs, workshops, and consultations.



Metta Earth Farm, LLC  
MEF

is the farm and retreat hosting business, which hosts the non-profit programs of the institute, as well as the work of other land based enterprises that serve the larger community. This entity is set up to function as a worker owned cooperative business for future residents.



Metta Earth Community, LLC  
MEC

is a contemplative, eco-community in the early stages of development. MEC provides residence for Metta Earth Farm members and Metta Earth Institute staff to have livelihoods on the land.

## Metta Earth, Inc.

This entity is not yet legally formed, but will be imminently. Gillian Kapteyn Comstock and Russell Comstock purchased the property with a family gift on March 21, 2007. Metta Earth, Inc. will hold the title with an agreement to return equity to them as land shares are bought. Using Vermont's PUD (Planned Unit Development) structure, the land will be kept as a whole without subdivision, but rather with share holds in designated zones with individuals owning their own small dwellings, and the overall land held as Commons.

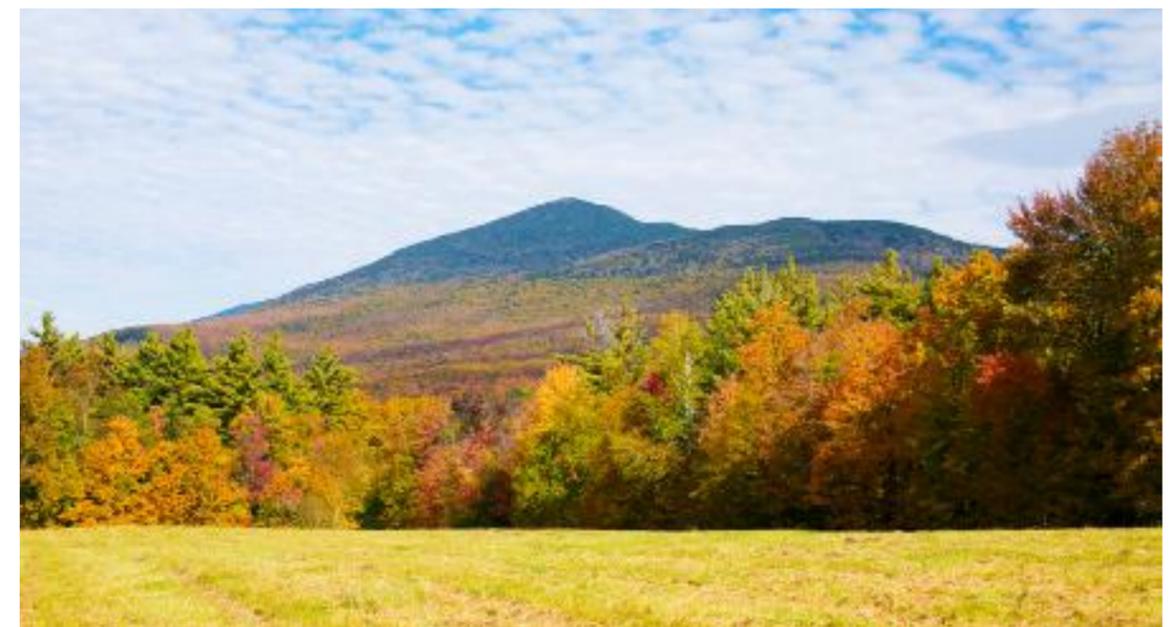
Note that each entity has its own internal governance, while Metta Earth, Inc. has a set of covenants guiding the overall stewardship of the land. Members from each of the three entities form the Core Council, who offer vigilance, guardianship, and governance for

the overarching needs of Metta Earth. Rather than Metta Earth, Inc. being an overbearing or unnecessary additional level of governance for these interconnected organizations, Metta Earth, Inc. is meant to provide gentle, but firm cohesion for the values and mission of the whole.

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The intregal relationship between these entities offers potential models for agricultural and cultural resiliency in resonance with natural processes and patterns, which can offer a hopeful response to global challenges. More than the sum of each of the organizations it supports, Metta Earth becomes a soulful, yet grounded forum for social and ecologically vital innovation.

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## Metta Earth Institute

**M**etta Earth Institute, Inc. is a small, non-profit, tax exempt, 501c3 educational retreat center integrating contemplative practice, deep ecology, regenerative food systems, and social activism to create resilient sustainable communities.

Focusing on aspects of contemplative ecology, MEI offers retreats, trainings, programs, workshops, and consultations. In this first stage, it has not owned the land or buildings, but rather has leased with a facility fee the resources of MEF, as described in that section.

MEI intends to support others in cultivating a consciousness in deep reconnection with Earth. MEI programs are designed to be experiences in living, learning, and loving community. Contemplative Ecology is the integration of yoga, meditation, and other contemplative practices with pathways for ecologically sustainable, and even thriving lifeways. In a time of collapsing social constructs and a highly degraded environment, this work is dedicated to cultural renewal generating compassion for all life.

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*“The last two weeks have been incredibly empowering. Metta Earth provides a place to reconnect with your inner strengths and passions while seeing how these things relate to the greater whole. We were able to learn through experience, improvisation, and deep discussion. I know this has left a lasting impression on my way of being.”*

**Kaila Pennock, Social Change Leadership Training**

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## Continuing Program Development

**Leadership for Diversity:** Metta Earth Institute continues to work with a number of universities and colleges to provide program participants with hands-on, experiential learning opportunities in the form of leadership trainings, internships, capstone projects, and retreats. In an attempt to serve the larger educational community, MEI is interested in creating month-long, semester-long, and year-long programs. MEI is committed to providing fellowships and scholarships to support a highly diversified learning community.

**Yoga Teacher Partnerships:** MEI intends to continue collaborating with yoga teachers in other communities and regions to create yoga programs with experiential immersion in ecologically sustainable practices.

**Hermitage:** MEI is also developing a hermitage with the intention to create programs to support the advancement of meditation and contemplative practice from varying traditions.

**Green Burial Ground:** The Green Burial Ground is a project of Metta Earth Institute (page 18). MEI is developing programs related to the field of death, dying, and bereavement.



## Continuing Organizational Development

MEI is in the process of expanding the Board of Directors to include expertise in ecovillage development, nonprofit work, farming, cooperatives, and contemplative life. MEI also hopes to engage a core team of educators so that the founders may ‘pass the torch’ to others. Another developmental stage will be further training of the operational team, which includes marketing, admissions, and overall business management.

## Next Phase: Building Development

Three significant projects require a capital campaign to finance the design-build process. All donations to MEI are tax exempt.

1. A grant or other forms of funding will empower a design team and project management for the building development phase.
2. The new site for MEI requires purchase of a share in the Interlude/Solitude zone and further funding for its facilities which include a main gathering room, guest dwellings, a kitchen, dining, and bath area.
3. Donations are needed to purchase a share in Infinitude for a Green Burial Ground and further funding for the development of the green burial site.

*Metta Earth Institute in Interlude  
Sketch by Madeleine Lyman*

## Metta Earth Farm

**M**etta Earth Farm, LLC is the farm and retreat business, which hosts the nonprofit programs of the institute, as well as the work of other land based enterprises that serve the larger community. This entity is set up to function as a worker owned cooperative business for future residents.

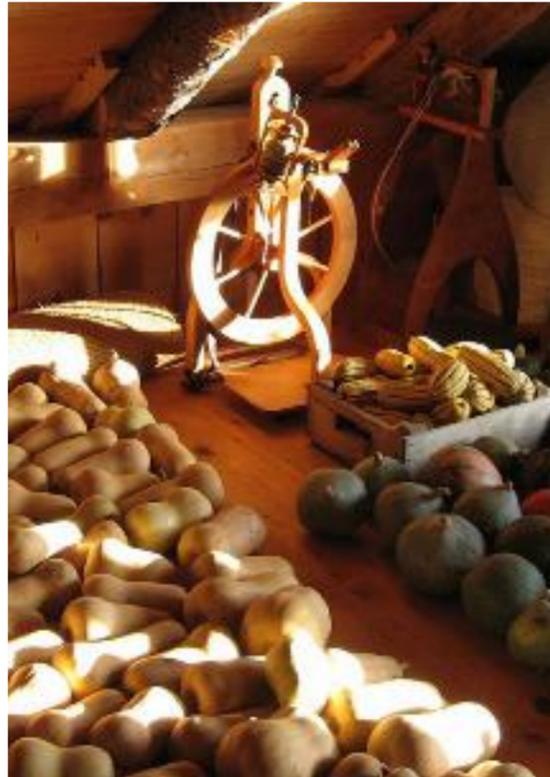
Metta Earth Farm serves four main purposes:

The farm provides a large percentage of **organically grown, nutrient dense food** for guest, team, and resident meals both fresh in season and preserved for the long winters.

As a working farm and permaculture site, Metta Earth Farm facilitates **educational experiences** in carbon farming, restorative agriculture, plant medicine, and regenerative food systems.

MEF attends to **accommodations and teaching spaces**, creating beautiful, healthy, and clean sanctuary environments for all the programs.

The farm also regularly offers **food to the larger community** with a small CSA, seasonal farmstand, small store, occasional sales to local schools and other markets, and seasonal donations to local food shelves.



The farm is located on Metta Earth's 158 acres of mixed woodlands, fields, and pastures. The small scale diversified farm utilizes all 35 acres of pasture and field with some use of the forest land as well. The farm includes a restored timber frame heritage barn, a greenhouse, chicken tractors used in rotational grazing, a one acre biodynamically nourished garden, various other flower and herb gardens, and a run-in animal shelter. MEF owns flocks of heritage breed animals, including a herd of Milking Shorthorn cows, a flock of Icelandic sheep, laying hens, bees, and two lovable barn cats.

### Continuing Lifeways

With the enjoyment and embodiment of a life close to the land, MEF residents work together to nourish community and explore the rejuvenation of ecologically committed village culture. By intertwining the paths of gardeners, farmers, permaculturists, homesteaders, cooks, herbalists, beekeepers, laundry tenders, hand-crafters, those in this endeavor may find meaning in the humble tasks of land and home stewardship, practicing mindfulness, beauty making, and the creation of art in the daily round.

Through wholesome, land based lifeways, these stewards are teachers and educators passionate about creating sanctuaries for experiential learning, living, and loving. With a fierce commitment to vital, healthfully grown food, they want to support learning communities in permaculture, biodynamic gardening, and organic, restorative agriculture. The hosting of all the MEI programs is guided by this intent.

### Next Phase: Residential Farm Cooperative

Metta Earth Farm is intended to be a worker-owned farm cooperative. Supporting residential membership through the Metta Earth Community with a goal of ten to fifteen co-op members, each of whom purchases a share in overall farm assets. MEF is currently seeking residential farm co-op members.

Each resident of Metta Earth Community is required to purchase a share in the farm cooperative, which provides basic food access. Beyond this, coop members can develop possible enterprises, which may include plant medicine, tea making, mushroom cultivation, nursery, wool products, and a farm-to-table restaurant.

The main house in the Gratitude zone, which is the common house for Metta Earth Community, will provide common dining space, commercial kitchen, and food preservation and storage areas to support food processing enterprises. The existing timber framed heritage barn is also a common space to support farm enterprises.



## Metta Earth Community

Metta Earth Community is a small, residential, contemplative, eco-community in the early stages of development. The community supports the cultivation of ecological thriving with the practices of restorative agriculture, biodynamic farming, permaculture, alternative and appropriate energy technologies including solar power, composting systems, green and natural building, and locally sourced hand crafts.

The Earth Charter, as a global document, as well as other ecovillages around the world, such as Auroville and Findhorn, are strong guides in this project in creating a just, sustainable, and peaceful future. Metta Earth Community is a forum for collaborative inquiry and the rich development of social permaculture.

*The interweaving of an enlivened contemplative consciousness, with the ecology of daily life, nourishes sensitivity to earth and its inhabitants, renewing a compassion for all life.*

The seasonal team community, beginning in 2007, has been consistently comprised of 5-8 resident members living here and carrying on the first phase of community development work both on the farm and in the institute. The further development of MEC offers MEF members and MEI staff the opportunity to have their own long term dwellings clustered in two zones on the land.



### Emerging Building Design

Metta Earth Community has been formed as an LLC and is structured similarly to the cohousing model. Members have a share in the overall property and own their own dwelling.

The main house, four yurts, and four wall tents have been the primary residence for the community team in the first 10 years. Also in this first phase, the Elder House was completed in 2011. It is a carbon neutral green building, powered by a stationary solar array.

It is the first purchased share in the Metta Earth Community. A septic system has been designed, permitted, and built to accommodate this community. Three wells on the property have been drilled to provide water for the community clusters.

*A resonance of community culture has been created over the past ten years that now merits the full development of an ecovillage residential community.*

### Next Phase: Building Design

To support the work of the institute, farm, and other land-based economies created at Metta Earth, the next step is to more fully design the built environment to include housing clusters in the Plentitude and Quietude zones.

In addition, renovations need to be implemented at the main house in Gratitude to comply with ACT 250 permit requirements including a commercial kitchen, handicap access, fire safety codes, and a hook-up to the ecologically designed, permitted, and installed septic system. Significant design work in this regard has already been accomplished.

Within the two zones of Plentitude and Quietude, thirteen residential shares will be available. These dwellings provide homes for faculty, staff, and family working with MEI, as well as co-op members of MEF. It is possible that family members may create other local economies and/or work off-site, but largely we intend that the Metta Earth Community serves MEI and MEF.



Elder House in Plentitude



Plentitude—A cluster of 4 buildings: 2 with 2 dwellings, 2 with 3 dwellings.



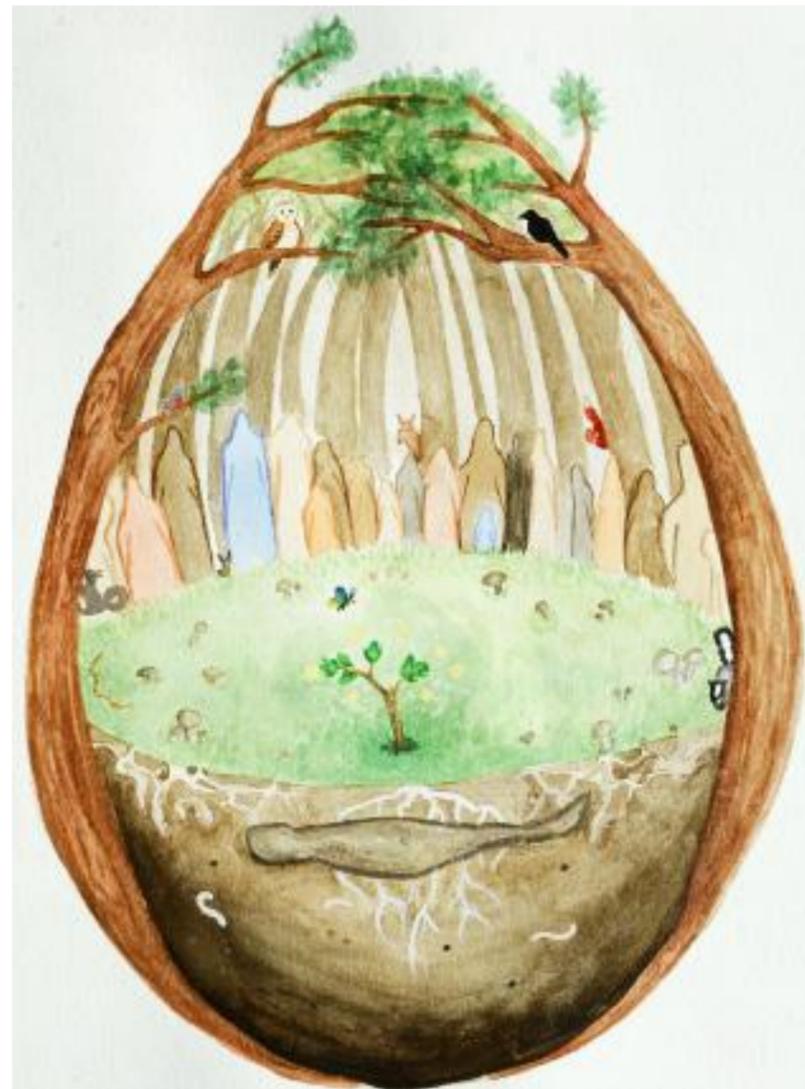
Quietude—3 dwellings: each with a studio apartment. Sketches by Madeleine Lyman

## Green Burial Ground

To counter the adverse effects that today's conventional burial system has on our environment, our Green Burial Ground offers a more ecologically mindful alternative.

As members of the community pass away, we offer the opportunity for their burial to be as in tune with the natural environment as possible.

Over time, the forest can thrive with plants that serve as a memorial for those who have gone before us; a reminder of life's cyclical nature.



Painting by Brooke Sambol

### Emerging Site Development

The Green Burial Ground is a project of Metta Earth Institute and will be an extension of its non-profit organization. The Infinitude zone has been designated as the site for this project and is located at the center of the property.

Metta Earth is part of the working landscape Current Use Program and is working with a forester from Vermont Family Forests to create an ecologically sensitive design and implementation.

A committee is forming with local green burial advocates, as well as other support team to actualize this project. The Green Burial Council, a national non-profit, offers guidelines that support this type of development. Because 2015 legislation was passed allowing non-profit green burial grounds in Vermont, Metta Earth Institute is now able to work with legal and financial advisors to implement one of the first projects.

Metta Earth Institute is in the process of designing guided retreats and programs for bereavement, aging, death and dying, as well as various dimensions of green burial.

### Next Phase

A business plan and legal/financial documents are needed to formalize this project.

A capital campaign will provide funds to purchase land shares and for the development of the project.

Metta Earth Institute is forming a committee consisting of regional green burial advocates to guide and sustain this project.

#### Tibetan Book of Living and Dying by Sogyal Rinpoche

*This body is not me.  
I am not caught in this body,  
I am life without boundaries,  
I have never been born and I have never died.  
Over there the wide ocean and the sky  
with many galaxies  
All manifests from the basis of consciousness.  
Since beginningless time I have always been free.  
Birth and death are only a door through which  
we go in and out.  
Birth and death are only a game of hide-and-see.  
So smile to me and take my hand and wave  
good-bye.  
Tomorrow we shall meet again or even before.  
We shall always be meeting again at the true source,  
Always meeting again on the myriad paths of life.*

## Your Response

With your engagement during this pivotal time on the planet Metta Earth will continue to be a sanctuary for cultural renewal.

Though many systems are breaking down - environmentally, socially, politically, and spiritually - there is a worldwide resurgence of creativity and innovation. Metta Earth's vision is to participate in this regenerative work of our times, through supporting land stewardship, the

sharing of resources, cooperative economies, and the centering powers of a contemplative life. Our opportunity now, in a time of great crisis, is to nurture deep resilience and the renewal of a restorative culture.

We invite you to take action in creating a restorative culture. Join Metta Earth's vision in the following ways:

### Metta Earth Institute, 501(c)3

- Make a tax-deductible donation:
  - Scholarship fund for greater leadership program diversity
  - Design build process for MEI's new site
  - Green Burial Ground design and development
  - Operational funding for staff, marketing, and business management
- Recruit or become a member of the Board of Directors
- Apply to be on the MEI Staff
- Participate in a MEI program

### Metta Earth Farm, LLC

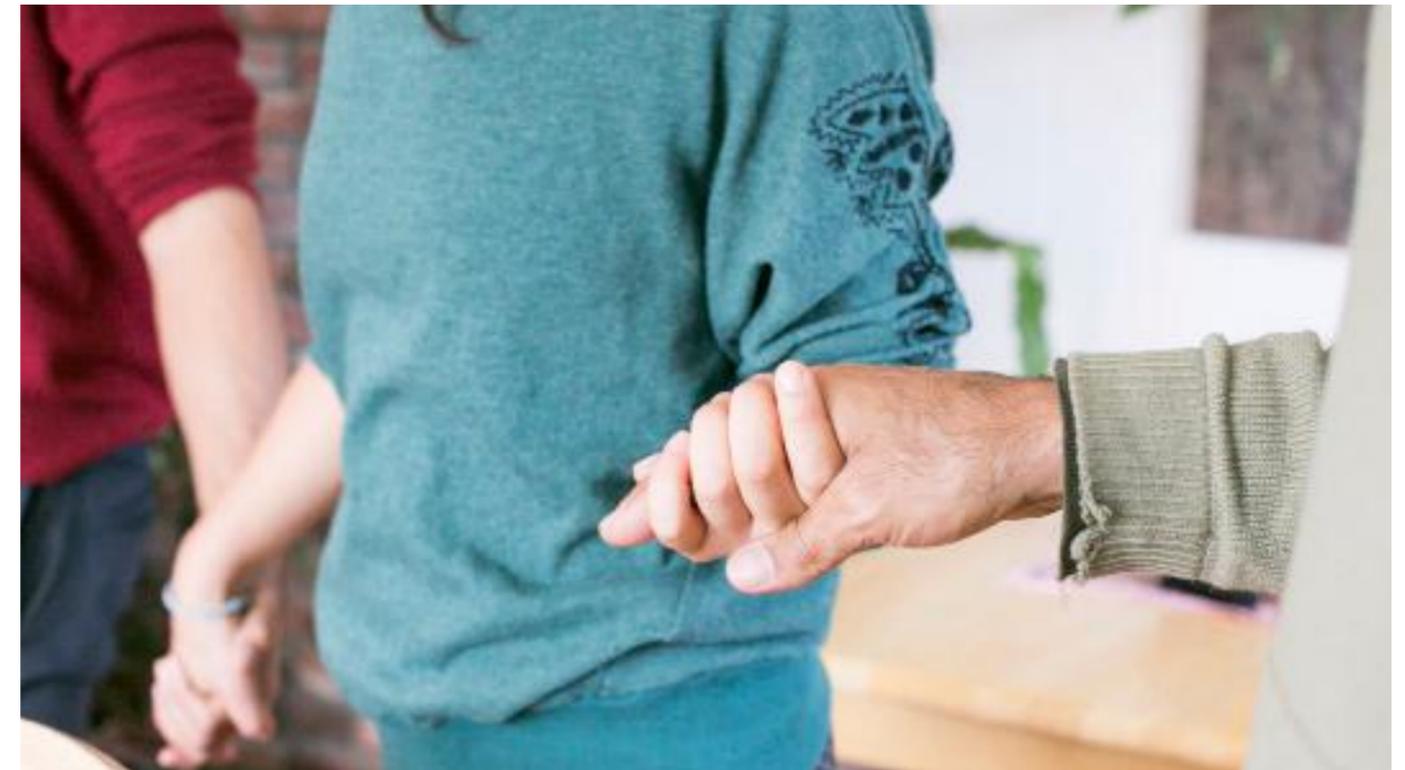
- Contribute or donate in-kind services to support the development of a residential worker-owned farm cooperative, such as:
  - Worker owned cooperative design consulting
  - Legal consulting
  - Access to farm grant and subsidies
- Become a member of the farm cooperative

### Metta Earth Community, LLC

- Invest in this project
- Become a consultant in the design process
- Become a resident

Please contact us at:

Metta Earth 334 Geary Road South, Lincoln, Vermont 05443 info@mettaearth.org 802-453-8111



“It is possible that the next Buddha will not take the form of an individual. The next Buddha may take the form of a community—a community practicing understanding and loving kindness, a community practicing mindful living. This may be the most important thing we can do for the survival of the earth.”

**Thich Nhat Hanh**



“Metta Earth is a place where you can come home to your true self  
as a being on the planet at this exact moment,  
one of great change.”

**Madeleine Lyman,**  
**Permaculture and Ecovillage Design Participant**



**Metta Earth**

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