

Restoring life on Earth

Global Rewilding Manifesto



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STATEMENT OF INTENT

Life on Earth is in crisis. Climate disruption, biodiversity loss, and the collapse of ecosystems threaten the foundations of our shared future. Yet within these challenges lies an extraordinary opportunity: to restore balance, resilience, and hope through rewilding.

Rewilding is the renewal of life itself. It is the process of giving space, time, and freedom back to nature so that ecosystems can recover their integrity, diversity, and resilience. At its heart, rewilding is about enabling natural processes to shape land, water, and seas; restoring the web of interactions between species; and creating conditions where wildlife and people can thrive together.

Rewilding is not about returning to an imagined past, but using past references as a guide to a flourishing future. It embraces the evolutionary potential of life on Earth, recognising that ecosystems are dynamic and adaptive. By restoring keystone species, revitalising habitats, and reconnecting landscapes and seascapes, rewilding offers a pathway to heal the wounds of ecological degradation and to strengthen our collective resilience in the face of climate breakdown, biodiversity collapse, and water insecurity.

Equally, rewilding is about people. It is rooted in inclusivity, justice, and respect for the rights, knowledge, and leadership of Indigenous peoples and local communities. It invites all of us to reimagine our relationship with nature—from one of domination and extraction to one of reciprocity and regeneration.

Rewilding is both a philosophy and a practice. It is an ethical compass, reminding us of our shared responsibility to protect and restore the Earth, and a practical approach, guiding concrete action across landscapes, rivers, coasts, and cities. Above all, rewilding is a call to courage and creativity: to let life return, to allow hope to grow, and to co-create a thriving planet for present and future generations.

We, the participants of the Rewilding Our World Conference 2025 – rewilders, scientists, Indigenous peoples, policymakers, civil society organisations, communities, and concerned citizens from across the globe – come together in recognition of a profound truth: that humanity is but one strand in the web of life. Our survival and flourishing depend on the resilience, diversity, and vitality of the natural world, which itself carries an evolutionary legacy spanning billions of years.

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01

Preamble

Recognising that climate breakdown, biodiversity collapse, land and ocean degradation, water insecurity, and the erosion of cultural and ecological diversity represent interconnected crises threatening life on Earth;

Acknowledging that these crises are rooted in extractive economies, unsustainable consumption, and governance systems that prioritise short-term human interests over ecological integrity;

Understanding that biodiversity is not simply a tally of species, but a living, place- and context-specific web of life: encompassing plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms, the genetic variation within them, and the ecosystems and ecological processes they form—whose interactions, relationships, and evolutionary dynamics sustain resilience, integrity, and the capacity of nature to thrive;

Recalling the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), which defines biodiversity in its genetic, species, and ecosystem dimensions, and reaffirms the duty of all nations to conserve and use it sustainably; and recalling Target 2 of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which calls for the restoration of at least 30% of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine ecosystems by 2030.

Recognising that ecosystems are dynamic and continuously shaped by the interactions among species, environmental factors, and ecological processes;

Acknowledging that ecosystem emergence refers to the process by which new, organising systems develop through the interaction of their components, leading to properties and functions that cannot be reduced to the sum of individual part;

Preamble (cont.)

Emphasising that ecosystem emergence is interaction-driven, arising from relationships among organisms, communities, and abiotic conditions; is self-organising, through collective processes of adaptation and feedback; generates new properties and functions that sustain ecological integrity; and depends on the establishment of relational connections between components, enabling the development of complex and self-sustaining systems;

Affirming that such emergent properties include biodiversity patterns, nutrient cycles, hydrological regulation, and resilience to disturbance, which are essential for the stability and adaptability of life-support systems;

Reaffirming the findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES, 2019), which highlight the need to understand and safeguard ecosystem functions, feedbacks, and tipping points;

Noting further that the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) underscores the importance of restoring dynamic ecological processes, rather than only structural elements, in order to achieve long-term resilience;

Affirming that Indigenous peoples, local communities, and frontline defenders of ecosystems continue to safeguard much of the world's remaining biodiversity, often at great personal risk, yet are too often marginalised in global decision-making;

Mindful that the evolutionary heritage of life, encoded in DNA and manifested in diverse ecosystems, is a legacy that must not be extinguished by human negligence, exploitation, or hubris;

Conscious that present and future generations, human and non-human alike, have an equal stake in a thriving, resilient, and rewilded planet;

Preamble (cont.)

Recognising that pristine nature and healthy ecosystems are essential to human well-being, providing not only clean air, water, and food security, but also profound mental, emotional, and spiritual benefits arising from humanity's connection with the living world;

Noting that the recognition of the Rights of Nature and ecosystems has begun to emerge in law and policy across regions, offering a foundation for systemic transformation;

Understanding that rewilding provides both an ethical compass and a practical pathway to restore damaged ecosystems, rekindle human–nature relationships, and enable climate adaptation;

Therefore, through this Rewilding Manifesto, we unite to reimagine our place within the community of life – shifting from domination to coexistence, from exploitation to regeneration, and from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism.

We affirm our shared responsibility to safeguard the evolutionary legacy of all beings, to restore ecosystems, and to ensure justice for present and future generations.

Vision



*A global call to restore life,
revive ecosystems, and
rewild our world.*

We envision a world in which humans live as respectful participants within Earth's web of life –

- where forests, rivers, wetlands, grasslands, oceans, and wildlife are allowed to flourish, evolve, and regenerate;
- where humans honour and respect the common ground we share with all species – the living earth itself – as the basis of our mutual survival and evolution;
- where local knowledge, scientific understanding, and community guardianship converge to protect ecosystems;
- where democracy is expanded to include the Rights of Nature and the interests of future generations; and
- where rewilding guides the transformation towards a resilient, just, and regenerative future for all beings.

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Purpose



*To guide global efforts in
rewilding, ecosystem
restoration, and
recognising nature's rights.*

The purpose of this Manifesto is:

- To forge a common commitment to rewild, restore and protect ecosystems, species, and their evolutionary integrity.
- To accelerate the transition from anthropocentric to ecocentric law and governance.
- To legitimise and advance the legal recognition of the inherent Rights of Nature and ecosystems.
- To catalyse rewilding as an ethical and practical pathway for restoration, resilience, and coexistence.

Guiding Principles

The Global Rewilding Manifesto outlines 9 guiding principles. While all are interconnected, some may be especially relevant to your work. This section highlights the principles that align with your strategy and efforts to restore ecosystems, protect species, and support coexistence with nature.

01

Evolutionary Heritage: DNA as Living Legacy

Every organism carries a unique evolutionary lineage encoded in DNA – the product of billions of years of adaptation and ongoing change. This genetic heritage is not a human possession but a shared, living legacy of life, continuously shaped by natural processes. It must be allowed to evolve freely while being shielded from unnatural threats such as habitat destruction, industrial agriculture, pollution, genetic manipulation, and anthropogenic climate change. Ensuring that DNA remains dynamic and resilient is both an ethical imperative and a responsibility to generations yet unborn.

02

Rights of Ecosystems

Ecosystems, as the foundation of biodiversity, stability, and resilience, hold intrinsic rights that cannot be subordinated to narrow economic or political interests. Forests have the right to regenerate, rivers to flow freely, soils to sustain fertility, and species to exist and evolve. Recognising these rights in law and governance affirms that ecosystems are not commodities, but living systems with inherent value.

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07

Guiding Principles (cont.)

03

Democracy Redefined

Current democratic systems too often prioritise immediate human demands and electoral cycles, disregarding ecological timeframes and non-human interests. We call for an eco-inclusive democracy, where ecosystems, non-human beings, and future generations are structurally represented in decision-making. This includes guardianship systems, ecological ombudspersons, and institutional frameworks that extend rights and representation beyond the human sphere.

04

No Colonisation of the Future

Decisions taken today must not leave behind legacies of toxic residues, irreversible degradation, or diminished ecological options for future generations. Ecological debt is a form of intergenerational injustice. We affirm the principle that our actions must preserve – and wherever possible, enhance – the ecological foundations upon which future societies depend.

05

Rewilding as Compass

Rewilding is both an ethical and practical framework to restore ecosystems, deliver justice to all beings, and enable climate adaptation. By re-establishing ecological processes, reconnecting habitats, and supporting the return of keystone species, rewilding restores nature's autonomy. It represents a shift from human control to ecological self-determination – from managing nature as a machine to participating in nature as a community.

Guiding Principles (cont.)

06

Knowledge and Justice

Effective restoration depends on the integration of diverse forms of knowledge. Scientific inquiry, Indigenous wisdom, and community-led practices each provide essential insights into the complexities of ecosystems. We affirm the need to value, protect, and weave together these knowledge systems in ways that ensure equity, respect, and justice.

07

Solidarity and Equity

Rewilding should be carried out with respect for people and communities, acknowledging the rights and contributions of those living closest to nature. Marginalised communities, Indigenous peoples, and women should have meaningful roles in rewilding initiatives, and solidarity with environmental defenders and recognition of the rights of those most affected by ecological degradation are central to this Manifest.

08

Interconnectedness and Common Ground

We affirm the profound interdependence of all living beings and the common ground we share – the air, water, soils, and ecosystems that sustain the web of life. Protecting rivers, forests, seas, and wildlife is inseparable from protecting humanity itself. Recognising this shared foundation calls us to move beyond human exceptionalism and embrace our place within – not above – the community of life, safeguarding our collective future and the planet's ongoing evolution.

09

Call to Action

We stand at a crossroads in history. The Anthropocene has revealed the destructive consequences of human dominance, yet it also opens the possibility for a conscious transformation. Rewilding offers both a philosophy and a praxis for that transformation – a compass pointing towards regeneration, justice, and coexistence.

We therefore call upon:

Governments

- to recognise and enshrine the Rights of Nature in law, to support large-scale ecological restoration, and to adopt governance systems that represent the interests of ecosystems and future generations.

International Institutions

- to embed rewilding and the Rights of Life within global frameworks, treaties, and funding mechanisms, ensuring coherence between biodiversity, climate, and development agendas.

Civil society and communities

- to champion rewilding initiatives, hold governments accountable, and foster cultures of coexistence and ecological stewardship.

Indigenous peoples

- to be recognised as central partners and knowledge holders in shaping rewilding pathways, with their sovereignty and rights fully respected.

Businesses and financial institutions

- to abandon extractive models, align with regenerative principles, and invest in ecological restoration and nature-positive economies.

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Call to Action (cont.)

Landowners and land managers

- to embrace their role as custodians of the landscapes they oversee, enabling ecosystems to recover and thrive, adopting management practices that restore connectivity, biodiversity, and ecological processes while balancing human use responsibly.

Scientists and educators

- to deepen public understanding of ecological processes, promote rewilding as a pathway to resilience, and ensure that knowledge informs transformative action.

Individuals

- to live in solidarity with the web of life, reducing harm, supporting rewilding initiatives, and cultivating humility, respect, and wonder for the natural world.

We affirm that rewilding is not an act of nostalgia but of responsibility: to restore the evolutionary potential of life, to reimagine our economies and democracies, and to reconnect humanity with the living Earth.

In declaring this Manifesto, we extend an invitation to all peoples and institutions to join us in restoring the integrity of nature and safeguarding the Rights of Nature, so that forests may regrow, rivers may flow, species may thrive, and future generations may inherit a planet rich in beauty, diversity, and possibility.

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A Living Manifesto

This manifesto is a living document, intentionally incomplete and open to evolution. It invites contributions, amendments, and refinements from all who share an interest in the state of nature and a respect for the species that inhabit it. By welcoming the thoughts, knowledge, experiences, and feelings of every community, group, and individual, it aims to become a truly collective expression of humanity's commitment to the natural world.

Grounded in rigorous research and science, yet flexible in its scope, this manifesto exists not as a final statement, but as an ongoing conversation—one that grows richer and more inclusive with each voice that joins it.

**Together, we commit to rewilding
our world – and ourselves.**

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Acknowledgements

The Global Rewilding Manifesto is the result of a collaborative effort by a diverse community of organisations, researchers, practitioners, scientists, and conservationists. Their collective expertise, experience, and commitment to restoring ecosystems, protecting species, and promoting ecological resilience have shaped the principles and vision presented here. This shared effort reflects the global commitment to rewilding and the recognition that meaningful change requires collaboration across disciplines, sectors, and borders

We thank you for your continued support in developing the Global Rewilding Manifesto as a living document, helping us refine its vision, principles, and impact over time.

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