



Manitou Arbor Ecovillage

CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN

The Spiritual Basis of our Group

The future residents of Manitou Arbor recognized from the beginning that it is difficult to live life, make good decisions, big and small, without some guide to remind us of our better selves and our deepest commitments. Thus, we spent a long time discussing and creating this statement of Covenant. We read it before every general meeting to keep us aware.

The Manitou Arbor Ecovillage Covenant

I, _____, desire membership in this community and am aligned with its Mission, Vision and Values and with the following principles, agreements and goals:

Principles: *We acknowledge our spiritual bond to each other and all life and aspire to express, in the way we live, the following:*

1. A community committed to nourishing ourselves, others, and this planet through a sustainable lifestyle must incorporate a deep sense of the sacred in all things, and demonstrate that sense in its work, play, free inquiry, multicultural expression, spiritual practice, and celebration of life.
2. Such a community will act with respect, honoring the inherent value and dignity of all life and all people.
3. We commit ourselves to co-create with Spirit a wise, just, and sustainable culture in balance with the natural world, and to serve as a living example, manifesting a spiritual ecology, a vision of a new reality in our daily lives; and we commit ourselves to supporting each other in living this vision.
4. Such a community will constantly keep in consciousness the following principles of right action: compassion for one another and all life, kindness, a non-violent way of living, expression of freedom mindful of responsibility, and a thirst for social justice.

5. We see cooperation as the fundamental model for human endeavor. When a proper balance exists between the independence of the individual and the interdependence of the community, each serves to enhance and complement the other. While we choose to live in a cooperative community, caring for and supporting each other's physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, we each take primary responsibility for our own actions and needs.

6. We recognize that active participation in decision-making is essential for the healthy growth and development of individuals as well as the community as a whole.

7. Our community will also be committed to the pursuit of knowledge and its active promulgation to the wider community.

8. As a corollary to our core value of respect, we value diversity in persons, their cultures and all life forms.

9. We recognize the value of harmony in our relationships. In concert with seeking that harmony, we seek to create and maintain beauty in our natural and built surroundings.

Agreements: *In order to make our shared values and principles operative in our life in community, I will strive to live in accordance with all of the values and principles previously expressed in our community documents and this covenant, as well as the specific actions listed below:*

1. Live in respect to the lands of the ecovillage, their non-human inhabitants, and one another, honoring and nurturing the integrity of all individuals and the whole system of which we are a part.

2. As a way of being respectful, considerate and inclusive; whenever possible we will use consensus as our decision making process.

3. Interact directly, openly and honestly with each other, avoiding physical and emotional abuse in our relationships.

4. Remain as open and conscious as we possibly can to feedback from other community members. If conflict arises, to first seek resolution with the individual involved. If that fails, to seek mediation through the appropriate means provided by the community. If the conflict is not mine, I will not take sides, rather I will support and encourage those involved to proceed with the resolution process.

5. Sustain my individual involvement in the community by contributing my ideas, talents, and energies in the spirit of active commitment and participation.

6. Encourage my own and others fulfillment of this covenant by holding it as a touchstone and living in conscious awareness of the vision and purpose that has brought us together.

Goals: *I support these goals:*

1. To foster awareness of our connection to Spirit and the Earth and our interdependence with the web of life.

2. To facilitate our transition toward a life of sustainability that leaves the world better than we found it, takes no more than we need, tries not to harm life or the environment that supports us, and makes amends if we do.
3. To foster the lifelong learning and growth of every community member, recognizing that each individual is both teacher and learner.
4. To preserve our land holdings through proper stewardship by means of designated natural areas and ecologically sound use of our resources.
5. To be a center of learning that serves as a living demonstration of our values.
6. To envision a restorative future and labor to bring it forth.
7. To promote personal, social and planetary healing.
8. To serve and reach out to local communities by sharing time, energy, and talents to foster healthier, sustainable living and to promote eco-justice.
9. To encourage creative expression and celebration of communal life and sacred times, seasons and places in ways which respect the spiritual insights and traditions of each member.
10. To encourage the establishment of member-owned and managed ecologically sound businesses, as well as economic activities managed by the ecovillage as a whole and develop economic processes that nurture our values.
11. To actively support the intentional community, permaculture, land reform and organic agriculture movements as we are able.
12. To support any further goals agreed to by the community. I agree to affirm and uphold this covenant.