

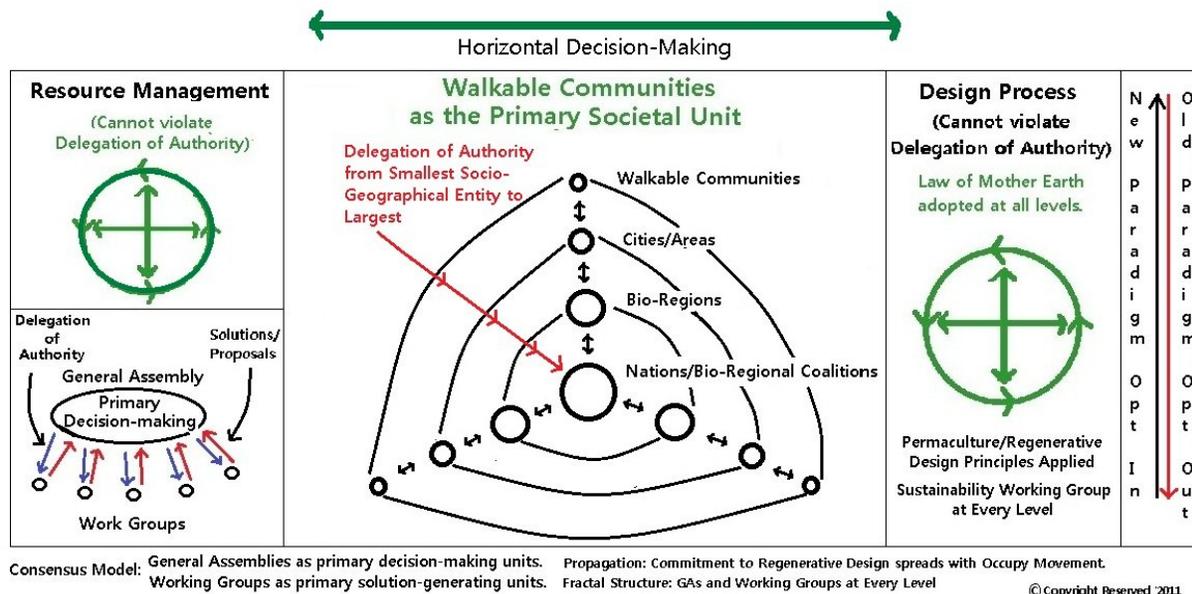
PermOccupy

A Pathway to a Sustainable Future

*“One cannot change an existing system;
one must create a new system that makes the old system obsolete.”*

- Buckminster Fuller.

PermOccupy



The “model” is simple in the core concept: as the Occupy Movement grows, sustainability hitches a ride with it. Detroit, NY and Santa Rosa, CA, already have Sustainability Work Groups, all of which, to my knowledge, subscribe to Permaculture.

The choices Occupy makes, if framed in terms of sustainable design, can profoundly influence the development of the next paradigm and bring awareness of the limits of our ecosystem services to, literally, billions. I can think of no other movement or process that might do this at this time. Others may follow, but source after source tells us the opportunity to reverse the damage to our ecosystem is slipping away, and this is framed in terms of less than a decade to do an about-face globally. The likelihood another global movement will rise, take hold and be more effective than Occupy would appear very small in the time frames we are facing.

For this reason, I advocate each Occupy group, and Occupy as a movement, make a commitment to the Rights of Earth and Sustainable/Regenerative/Permaculture Design Principles in order to align our actions, practices, and planning with the limits of the ecosystem.

The Occupy Movement and Permaculture as a Vehicle for Change

Permaculture (regenerative) Design has, for whatever reasons, only slowly gained acceptance as a toolbox for sustainability. The puzzle has always been how to spread the design principles. Permaculture Design Courses can only teach so many at what was hoped to be a rapid, increasingly exponential rate. Transition Towns have embraced Permaculture as the core element of their process, but Transition has proven to have limited appeal after initial rapid growth. While Permaculture does include what is referred to as Invisible Structures (social, economic and political design), Transition does not have a specific element or intention with regard to governance, and that may be why it hasn’t become the “occupy” movement to date.

Occupy is blatantly about activism and social change. I believe it also has to become about governance. The graphic above illustrates an interconnected structure with neighborhood-level

General Assemblies, city/town GA's, bio-regional/State GA's and national/regional GA's. This structure could replace current governance over time.

What has prevented Permaculture and Transition from becoming pervasive is, perhaps, that they have failed to embrace people in such a way that idiosyncrasies of the movement (e.g. while it is a false perception, or one primarily extant in the United States, Permaculture is often thought to be a "hippy" or New Age movement rather than the scientifically-based design system it actually is) do not interfere with broad acceptance. Though Permaculture as a design science and Transition, relying on Permaculture, as a sustainable communities incubator, are, in fact, pragmatic responses to our problems, until they can be seen as the non-ideological, practical structures they are, we need a way to move toward sustainable governance that carries sustainable design science along.

Occupy is a problem-solving movement with no assumption that a given way to do things is *the* way to do things, and explicitly embraces the broad spectrum, relying on the consensus process to work through the wide differences of the participants. Occupy, at least in rhetoric, does this in a way Permaculture and Transition have yet to prove they can. Permaculture and Transition are obviously focused on the greater ills of society, and are responses to them, but they have not successfully framed their existences that way to the wider audience. There is an image problem, though it is a misperception, and Occupy successfully overcomes this by framing the discussion *explicitly* as fundamental rights issues, which may be a key insight.

The irony that a sustainably designed society inherently eliminates all the social ills Occupy is targeting, and solves them in much more pragmatic and simpler ways than Occupy does, is not lost on the writer, but Occupy has so far successfully moved the issue of governance by the people to center stage. There is a massive opportunity to meld the design science of Permaculture, the community-based change of Transition Towns and the activism and governance possibilities of Occupy. This would inherently shift the foci of Occupy from, e.g. foreclosures to system-wide debt forgiveness as the perspective shifts from single elements (foreclosures) to full systems design (massive debt, interest, profit motive all require unending growth, which is inherently unsustainable) thus accelerating the work of those already involved in sustainable design by spreading it throughout the system at a rate so far unseen.

This model rests utterly on the assumption Occupy can not only continue to grow, but will; that it can be made to adopt sustainability as the core of its work; that even one truly knowledgeable, skilled designer backed by a few people with some knowledge, skill and commitment, in each group can be enough to initially steer Occupy towards viable solutioneering in the short term; and that a concerted, massive effort at education on the state of the ecology and sustainable design science is obviously needed over the near, medium and long terms.

Any one of these assumptions being incorrect likely invalidates the entire model.

Assumptions

- ❖ *Climate Change is Real and Rapid*
 - *Window to Begin Significant Action < Five Years*
 - *Arctic Sea Ice Canary in Coal Mine: Gone by 2017?*
 - *Large effect on global Climate and Speed of Change*
 - *Methane: Sea Bed Clathrates and Permafrost*
 - *Momentum Takes Decades to Reverse*

- *Extremes Drive Change: Series of New Normals*
 - *E.g., Present Course: Extreme Temps Severely Limit Crop Production by 63–82%*
 - *Effects of one-time events lasting*
 - *Punctuated Disequilibrium*
- ❖ *Nature Bats Last: Ecosystem Services Limiting Factor*
 - *Resources Limits are Real and Urgent*
 - *Oil, Rare Earth Ores, Plutonium, Nickel...*
 - *Exceeding Replacement Rate of Renewables: Water, Fish, Soil...*
 - *Economics Subset of Ecosystem Services*
 - *Economic Crisis Reflects:*
 - *System Instabilities*
 - *Resource limits, particularly in light crude oil*
 - *Climatic Instabilities: greater damages, higher costs > Food System Instabilities*
 - *The current economic system cannot be modified.*
 - *The reliance on growth is absolute.*
 - *The lack of shared abundance is inherent.*
- ❖ *System is Non-Linear/Chaotic*
 - *Bifurcations Now, Effects Later*
 - *We Discount the Future*
- ❖ *Ecological Collapse Possible $\leq 2C$; Likely $> 2C$; Certain $> 4C$?*
- ❖ *Economic Collapse Certain*
 - *In Overshoot*
 - *Growth Paradigm Ignores Limits to Ecosystem*
- ❖ *Solutions:*
 - *Simplify: Steady-state economics, Localization, Non-usurious banking; Jubilee*
 - *Regenerative Design*
 - *Built environment: Reuse, Recycle, Natural before technical, neighborhoods/small communities*
 - *Natural Systems: Restore Ecosystems; Limit Use to Replacement/Recycle Rates*
 - *Food System: Regenerative Farming, Localized Production, Small-holdings, Restore Soils*
 - *CO₂-Specific: Regenerative Farming (40% of emissions), Reforestation (100% of emissions), Localized, Regenerative Farming/Gardening (not calculated); Food Forests (not calculated; partial subset of Reforestation and Localized Food Production); Reduced Consumption (socio-economic, geo-political change).*

The PermOccupy Model Elements

Horizontal Decision-Making

Sustainable systems require the cooperative involvement of the full community to avoid resource misallocation in a Tragedy of the Commons failure mode. Currently extant sustainable communities, primarily aboriginal, typically employ some form of horizontal decision-making process and serve as our model; a return to earlier wisdom, perhaps.

Delegation of Authority

Key to this model, supported by the principle of implementing small solutions after planning from patterns to details and the concept of the neighborhood/village being the core sociopolitical structure, is the delegation of authority from the smallest to largest sociopolitical units. All solutions are ultimately local and the local level is where the greatest intimacy of knowledge either does, or needs to, exist. Jared Diamond addresses this in his work in being impressed by the vast local knowledge of the peoples he spent time with. He also, perhaps not startlingly, gauged the average IQ of the tribal peoples as being above that of the average person from “advanced” societies simply because the active exercise of their mental functions in meaningful, problem-solving conditions.

Consensus, too, seeks to validate all voices; the smallest unit must be given voice to encourage full engagement. To guard against the excesses of power, influence, money, etc., the smallest units must have a voice that gives them power equal to the traditionally more powerful interests.

Walkable Communities: Core Social-economic, Geo-political Unit

There is little debate these days about the need for walkable communities to increase efficient use of resources. They are much less energy intensive than spread out communities, overall, and can be created in both urban and rural areas. What is controversial is the Walkable Community as the primary sociopolitical unit of society. Aboriginal communities as an example, indicators of sustainability as the impetus, and Dunbar’s Number as justification, all point to small communities as the best way to problem solve and manage local resources. Consensus merely emphasizes what the other concepts point to since it works best in small groups. By creating nested geo-socio-political systems as in the PermOccupy graphic above, we take advantage of the benefits of small systems while creating systems complex enough to manage the incredible complexity of the Earth system... including ourselves. Permaculture also calls for building systems in chunks rather than en toto. This allows time to analyze the success of the element(s) created and informs whether our planned next steps need refinement or were well-conceived, eliminating the waste of time and resources inherent in repairing or rebuilding needed when a design is implemented then fails.

Permaculture/Regenerative Design as a Tool for Change

You don’t do Permaculture;
you apply Permaculture to what you do
– Larry Santoyo

To the uninitiated, it is impossible to do justice to Permaculture in a paragraph. One might describe it, roughly, thus: It is bio-mimicry; it is the application of the patterns, structures, processes, connections and succession found in Nature applied to the creation of human habitats in such a way that they ultimately integrate seamlessly with Nature, enhance the natural productivity of the planet and create systems that are sustainable over vast time frames.

Application of the principles of design, and this is surely socio-ecological engineering, will, if applied to solve social problems ethically and morally, lead the designer to sustainable solutions. The Three Ethics frame the application, and also allow us a way past ideologies and

beliefs so that we may engage in solutioneering regardless of background. I have tried to capture this in the following verbiage:

Care of the Earth: One must determine their own reasons for seeking to design sustainable systems, but the principles are not inherently chained to ideology. It is enough to understand the planet is a series of nested systems, all interdependent and indivisible. The ecological services provided by the natural world are the basis of all human activities, thus require careful and thoughtful interaction. Whether provided by a benevolent God or the Chaotic Universe, they represent limits to what we can do on this planet. Those who hope for a long future for humankind have little choice but to learn to live within these limits.

Permaculture design principles, being pragmatic, science-based ecological engineering, provide a common means to create solutions that break down ideological barriers.

Care of People: Care of People is not an ideological stance, it is a requirement of a healthy biological system. The battle between competitive free market systems and systems with extensive social safety nets comes down to one point: a healthy system requires all parts to be healthy to function optimally. When any one part of a system functions below optimum levels, the entire system becomes vulnerable. If each individual is being productive, the waste byproducts (crime, violence, mental illness, etc.) of society will be reduced. In the end, neither naked capitalism nor typical socialism are sufficient to create a sustainable future.

Share the Surplus: Abundance is waste if not productively used. Storing up supplies for lean times and emergencies is a good use of surplus, but uneaten food left to spoil is time and energy allowed to dissipate. These things become pollutants if not put to productive use. Over-abundance of food/resources leads to an abundance of population which overtakes ecosystem services, leading to a collapse of the population back to a level equal to the food available. What is first deemed to be abundance becomes a cause of crisis as excess flows through segments of the system, inevitably disrupting it. This is wholly independent of ideology. Using surplus to meet the goals of the first two ethics is sound system design.

Building a New System: Opting Out, Opting In

“One cannot change an existing system;
one must create a new system that makes the old system obsolete.”
- Buckminster Fuller.

“The greatest shortcoming of the human race is
our inability to understand the exponential function.”
- [Albert A. Bartlett](#)

PermOccupy must become about governance. The current paradigm cannot adapt to a regenerative future because of the inherent characteristics noted above – unending growth as a paradigm and design flaw. There also is not time to slowly modify the paradigm as the system is hitting tipping point after tipping point, leading to cascading failures across all nested systems. Rather than fighting the current system, more of us, all of us, must start creating sustainable

communities now. That simple choice begins addressing every social ill and systemic problem we face. We build the new paradigm as the old one collapses from our disuse of it. Local sustainability removes the leverages the current paradigm/governments have over us by supplying our own basic needs. The malls, the cars, the full closets of clothes, the appliances, they are all excess energy bled from the system and are not *needed*, merely desired.

There is no area of the planet, no niche ecosystem, no society, no community, no economic activity not already affected by the imbalances and failures already occurring. The oceans are in deep trouble with fish stocks a fraction of what they were, and entire fisheries have been depleted; potable water is an issue on every inhabited continent; social unrest is rising globally; food prices are rising inexorably, energy prices are rising inexorably, and supplies of the core energy source, oil, are falling; the climate is unstable and unpredictable already; species are disappearing at a rate an order of magnitude or two faster than any previous extinction except the dinosaurs, but that was caused by an asteroid impact.

Those familiar with the patterns of instabilities preceding system collapse – though many are undetectable and happen, seemingly, without warning – will recognize the fingerprint of the breakdown of non-linear systems. Think of a top wobbling and how it seems to go through phases of great stability, light wobbling, pronounced wobbling, wild gyrations, then full collapse. We're likely at the fourth bifurcation now. Alarming, chaotic patterns are more difficult to detect than non-linear systems are, and, while a well-understood non-linear system's collapse can be modeled, even predicted (a pile of sand collapses when the slope reaches a known angle, e.g.), we as yet have almost no ability to detect the wobbles in chaotic systems and have no ability at all to predict the order or timing of phase changes. The small degree to which we can detect wobbles in a chaotic system indicates that it's already too late to avoid them at the point we can detect them!

Add to all of that, the time needed to build a society is not short. Two simple examples illustrate this.

- It takes up to 17 years for the car fleet in the US to cycle, thus, it will take at least that long to shift to electric cars (though electric cars are a red herring: they're an unsustainable solution.)
- It can take decades to get a major project like Boston's Big Dig from concept to completion.

On this basis alone it should be clear the solution is not building more, but simplifying, localizing, un-building. PermOccupy recognizes the need for the neighborhood to become the core of Occupy. Each neighborhood must become as self-reliant as possible, thus economically and politically semi-autonomous. This recognizes local populations are those best situated to know their environment and manage it. Their autonomy can only be preserved if economic and political power is delegated upward to the broader units of cities, bio-regions and continents. This will result in regional and national governments that have the least possible power rather than the current structure of having the greatest possible power.

Limits to Growth, updated in 2004, finds a world in overshoot – roughly 50% over. Joseph Tainter tells us increasingly complex solutions to the problems we have created with incredible degrees of complexity cannot be solved with increasing complexity. The system reaches negative returns on increasing complexity and collapses. Jared Diamond tells us societies choose whether to collapse or not, and that there is typically an environmental component. The Hirsch Report for the US Government of 2005 stated altering *just* the energy system would need a 20 year lead time prior to peaking to prevent significant disruptions, 10 years to avoid

massive disruptions and waiting till the energy crisis arrived would guarantee chaos. Despite very high energy and commodity prices, pushing us into, and keeping us in, an economic crisis that has no end in sight, crude oil production has remained flat since 2005.

Climate science gets worse with each new paper, with the most recent data indicating massive destabilization of Arctic sea bed clathrates across the shallow areas of the Arctic Ocean, particularly on the Siberian continental shelf, but even off the coast of Spitsbergen.

“We can’t solve problems by using the
same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”

– Albert Einstein

If the pursuit of growth based in usury, economic beliefs that do not consider the real world of resources, and a financial system divorced from physical reality, both environmentally and socially, got us here, how can it get us out? We turn to sustainable systems as our model. What do they look like?

- They manage resources carefully and over very long time frames.
- They manage population.
- They are largely cooperative and egalitarian.
- They are simple.
- Their wellness indexes are high; the populations are happy, contented.
- Work replaces jobs.
- They enhance the productivity of the environment.
- They adapt to place.
- They live in small groups, typically affiliated with a network of communities.
- They produce and use what they need, not what they desire.
- “Teaching” is contextual and displays trust and respect for the intellects of children.
- “Ownership” is typically based in a Commons concept, and barter and/or gift economies.

None of this describes anything like what we have today. We have to choose simplification, and the simplest way forward is to begin building the future and opting out of the past. As PermOccupy rises, the growth paradigm falls.

Permaculture is the science of solving social problems sustainably.

The Nexus of Occupy, Egalitarianism and Permaculture

“Though the problems we face are increasingly complex,
the problems remain embarrassingly simple.”

- Bill Mollison

The First Principle of Permaculture is Observation:
Protracted & thoughtful observation rather than protracted and thoughtless labor.

- B. Mollison and D. Holmgren

The power inherent in coupling (Big Tent/All Voices/co-locate elements to maximize efficiency) these three elements lies in how they reinforce each other in their core principles. All three seek openness (transparency/everyone has input/collaborative/whole systems design), all three seek

solutions for all (99%/consensus decision-making/Permaculture design always seeks to solve a social problem and considers all elements and sectors – including people – in the design process), and all three seek an equitable, if not sustainable, future (Fairness/what is best for all?/Care of the Earth, Care of People, Share the Surplus/Fair Share/Fair Trade).

The perceived weaknesses of each may be seen as being supported and strengthened by the others:

- Occupy is seen warily as just another passing fad and fights the perception that systemic, meaningful, and rapid change is impossible.

Both Permaculture and Transition have created sustainable homesteads, systems and made significant steps towards sustainable communities in time periods ranging from a few years to a decade. By applying the structure of PermOccupy such that all solutions are local, the problem of change shifts from an overwhelming global perspective to a local one: build locally, change globally. Also, Permaculture Design has been active and growing for four decades and Transition for around a decade.

Egalitarianism and Permaculture are seen as too slow, with the former requiring time to make decisions because of the need to build consensus rather than achieve a majority or super majority. Permaculture states outright that good design begins with the first principle of regenerative design, observation: Protracted & thoughtful observation rather than immediate and thoughtless action.

What we should note is that thoughtfulness vs. thoughtlessness is a common element of traditions or cultures that are thought of as wise and that are also often sustainable. Consensus provides the mechanism for Occupy to effectively slow down to consider thoughtfully the future while keeping the pressure on for change, while Permaculture provides the method to design that future. The patience to study the environment one is designing extensively is to create long term efficiencies and resilience that do not need to be fixed or modified. The time spent observing for a year to see the space in all seasons and conditions to fully understand the energy flows (sunlight, wind, water, animals, people) is made up by literally never having to spend time fixing what isn't broken. This is no different than any design process that does proper needs and resource analyses. Permaculture simply emphasized this to the fullest. Time limits tend to lead to insufficient analysis and accepting "good enough."

Many aboriginal cultures engage in very careful, sometimes very drawn out discussion of important issues. Benjamin Franklin wrote of First Peoples that there were often misunderstandings with Europeans that arose from the simple fact that the First Peoples were thoughtful and deliberative. Some considered it rude to respond quickly to a suggestion or offer because it indicated the matter had not been carefully considered. The Europeans, by contrast, wanted immediate answers and immediate solutions and understood the delays to be criticism or rejection.

Indeed, many of the ills of the current era are a direct result of taking actions that are ultimately harmful, pushed forward by claiming that slow change is dangerous and unnecessary. The many toxins so pervasive in our society, e.g., are there because we thought them safe and had a false sense of security in using them. Rachel Carson pointed out long ago the dangers of this and we have the illnesses and birth defects to prove her right. The climate issue is a direct result of our use of fossil fuels which we have deemed such a boon. They have brought us to the point of self-extinction, or what I call sui-genocide.

That consensus, Permaculture and extant egalitarian societies all encourage slow, thoughtful deliberation and decision-making over thoughtless action, and listen to all voices and include all persons affected (the popular term “stakeholders”) indicates a Truth is present in each of these that is worthy of our attention.

“Stupidity is the attempt to iron out all differences,
and the failure to use them or value them effectively.”
- Bill Mollison

All three of our elements have as a goal the celebration of differences, the richness of diversity, the need for inclusive solutions.

Scenarios

The Road to Mordor

This is straightforward, is it not? We do not arrest emissions, we do not simplify our invisible systems, we continue to consume non-renewable resources and over-consume renewable resources, and the planet’s ability to support us and all other biota declines, probably more rapidly than it has been (because that is what a collapsing system does) - which is the fastest in the history of the planet except for meteor/asteroid impacts.

The failure to choose to simplify will lead to wars over resources as the population rises to between 9 and 12 billion – even as we can actually feed that many, and do so with healthy diets, not subsistence diets - if the 99%, the GLOBAL 99% - do not stand for healthy, sustainable systems. Even without wars, the rising tide of disasters brought on by extreme weather events driven by Climate Change will drain funds, resources, energy, talent and creativity just to tread water as a global society, let alone prosper.

As the temperature rises, even more so if the methane releases continue to accelerate, the extremes will become worse, and long before we reach 2C or 3C, the extreme events of all kinds will destabilize society. The Russian heat wave, Pakistani flooding, and Texas drought are but tastes of what is to come. Study after study is saying such events will no longer, are no longer, 1.000 year events, but will be occurring regularly. Summers over a broad swath of the US are expected to see *months* of extremely high temps. What will that do to food production? Our ability to work outside? The death rate will climb. And there is no guarantee the climate will stabilize at a level where the biota of the planet can reform into a survivable ecology for humanity. This is an existential threat.

Need I say more? No; this essay is not intended to convince those who doubt the limits of our planet.

The Road to Hobbiton

This is less straightforward. Where we are is clear: we are degrading the environment so quickly it is becoming obvious to even casual observers. Oil prices have been extremely high for seven years now while production has vacillated by no more than a million or so barrels a day. Renewable energy is rising, but is still a fraction of global energy use. Worse, the plans for the future include meeting the current level of energy use from renewable sources, all while rare

earth ores are already seen as in limited supply. Where will all those high quality magnets for windmills, electric motors, and such come from? And for how many generations? Wealth is concentrating at levels seen in the most decrepit ancient societies. Debt has been the mirage that has allowed the greatest energy consumers to pretend they are advancing instead of getting stuck in a monkey trap. And despite decades of warning on every possible front – from Hubble, Admiral Rickover, Rachel Carson, James E. Carter, The Club of Rome, Catton, Diamond, and so many others, we are at present making it worse each year.

The canary has already died. The solutions remain embarrassingly simple; the devil is in the details.

I addressed a set of assumptions already and have stated principles of sustainable design are the key to creating a sustainable future. The elements of the model have been stated. There are a few details to address, however. How does this really happen?

Much of that can be assumed from what has already been covered, so let me speak simply, thus, hopefully, clearly. One key to all of this will be we take to heart standing together is the only way to avoid falling alone. The idea of Occupy as a Big Tent, a group committed to decision-making to solve the ills of society, is key. It is echoed by the ethics of People Care and Sharing the Surplus of Permaculture and the inclusiveness of, and respect for, all voices, thus all people, found in egalitarian societies. The commitment to dialogue and to people over organizations of any kind must prevail in order for invisible systems to arise that will stand against attacks of all kinds, including force that will come from the power structures. It is only in sheer numbers and pure commitment to standing together that we will be able to withstand the power of the embedded structures. This commitment to the whole is what will make opting into the future paradigm and out of the past paradigm possible. We can literally build the new paradigm as the old one falls, and from its detritus. Why can't, for example, our Congress function using egalitarian principles and peopled by representatives from bio-regional General Assemblies who are bound to honor their decisions?

A second key will be the commitment to sustainable design. The decisions we make in the next five to ten years determine our future. We have that long to commit to the Earth. Every community, organization, invisible structure must understand the need for this commitment then urgently build the knowledge and skills to make it so.

A third key will be to use those things we already know work to begin to stabilize the ecology of the planet: reforestation (Hansen, et al.), regenerative farming (Rodale Institute) and reduced consumption. That last includes the obvious: localization, small resilient and efficient communities.

A fourth key, keeping the internet alive, at least as a backbone with community nodes so we can 1. track our sustainability and 2. continue to share knowledge, information and cultures and 3. Coordinate our response to power structures will be vital..

A fifth will be to simply reduce consumption. The “developed” nations will have to lower consumption and some of the “undeveloped” will need to be given the opportunity to rise some. But both must look to the aboriginal societies as the only models of sustainable societies we have. We must learn again that we are the best way to spend our time. Meaningful connections must overcome the distractions of technology and pleasure for the mere sake of pleasure, for example, where those things are not based in healthy use of our resources.

We are not talking about going back to medieval times, though we may well go back to that level of consumption. The blessing technological development does provide is that if well-used, intelligently applied and fully shared rather than hoarded, it provides leverage with which to both build the new paradigm before the embedded energy crumbles (machines wear out and eventually many will not be replaceable), and enhance the benefits of the ecosystem services the planet can provide. Technology is a multiplier, but cannot be the end game or the solution (Tainter).

A possible path:

- Occupy grows
- Commitment to Earth grows with it
- Sustainability Work Groups are established and act as the primary work group advising, guiding and providing resources to all other work groups in achieving their work
- Neighborhood General Assemblies are incubated everywhere
- Local resilience, efficiency and self-reliance rises
- Relationships with existing organizations become integrated and coordinated
- People are simultaneously opting out of the old paradigm by doing the above
- Governance shifts to egalitarian structures with neighborhoods at the core/co-equal and delegation of authority moving from neighborhoods to towns/cities then bio-regions and national/regional.
- People stand together as forces rise in defense of the current paradigm, maintaining the commitment to non-violence
 - As governance shifts, it is first manifested in opposition to decisions by the current power structure in the form of mass demonstrations, strikes and the aforementioned opting out, which starves the old paradigm
 - Steady-state economics begin to take hold: Bartering, The Commons, Gift Economies rise; fractional banking and interest- and corporate profit-based financial systems collapse.
 - Webs of sustainability develop, ultimately leading to semi-sustainable systems slowing and reversing climate change
 - Full sustainability achieved over the period of a century or more

All solutions being local, the devil will be in the details.

What Would PermOccupy Look Like?

Scenario I

A Detroit neighborhood General Assembly addresses the issue of vacant homes. The city has ordered all vacant homes be razed, but some “vacant” homes are actually being squatted in and all of them contain resources that could be recycled or reused or repurposed. The GA decides to work with the city to deal with the blight, but with the neighborhood undertaking most of the process and with full authority to approve the final plan. The city balks and sends in big equipment. A call goes out to the city: help us defend our resources from the city government! Thousands show up. The machines are stopped. The issue is renegotiated and a precedent established: The neighborhood rules those resources common only to the neighborhood.

Scenario II

Tired of the high prices, poor quality and poor choice of local groceries and party stores, a Detroit neighborhood decides to become self reliant in food production. They form a Land Trust or Co-op which every member of the community is a member of and participates in. They approach the city, individual owners and the county to acquire all vacant land within their borders to create a food system that will create food security for the neighborhood and provide income or trade opportunities with the rest of the city and/or region.

They successfully acquire a small percentage of the lots. The city, most owners and the county all balk at turning over large areas of land to the neighborhood. The community moves into action going to the city-level GA to begin developing new policies for land use in the city. The primary element being eminent domain based in the Law of Mother Earth and the right and necessity of local control in creating sustainable communities. The Land Trust/Co-op officially claims all unused lots within their boundaries as belonging to the community and begin improving them. When legal and direct actions begin from the city, individual owners, and county, and corporate money floods into the city to fight local control of the food system, the full city GA moves into action on all fronts.

Thousands begin actions in their neighborhoods making the same claim. Teach-ins and protests on sustainability and egalitarian governance, the power of governments, and local food resilience occur. Awareness grows that every neighborhood in Detroit can feed itself and free themselves from the predations of the corporation/government-dominated food system, and the extreme dis-ease inherent in it, and intentionally created. Community, family and market gardens, previously growing exponentially, explode across the city in weeks.

The city and county are forced to concede the right to manage resources at the local level. Local food stores and party stores agree to source locally-grown food first, regionally grown second and outside the bio-region only when necessary. Partnerships are created to supply specific food products not typically grown in the area by use of greenhouse and other season extension techniques to reduce the use of energy in shipping food in off-season. And some who fought so hard for a local food system are relieved they don't have to start a large garden since their neighbors are more than happy to.

Governance shifts further to the people and further from the corporate/governmental model.

Scenario III

Climate Change continues to be bogged down in ideologically-based false claims and propaganda. As scientists increase the frequency and intensity of their warnings about the climate slipping further and further from our control. The residents of Detroit decide the situation is too urgent to allow the status quo to drag on indefinitely. The call goes out: Who will run for Congress? Where is our Mrs. or Mr. Smith willing to fight the fight in Washington? (Perm) Occupy groups and their partners across the country take their cue and send out the same call: Who will stand? Who will speak in Washington with our voice, not their own? For our interests, not their own or for corporate masters? Who will listen to and speak for the neighborhood, city and bioregional GA's?

A second front opens when the National GA challenges the primacy of Congress: Stand for us, or stand aside. The Sustainability Work Group, long working to ensure a national and global commitment to sustainable design form an International Relations Work Group with a Sustainability Sub-Group. Representatives are sent to begin dialoguing and negotiating with foreign governments and Occupy groups.

Across the country the Mrs. and Mr. Smith campaign takes off. Candidates are identified and placed on ballots in most progressive and independent-dominated areas. Both houses of the new congress carry a majority coalition of Occupiers, progressives and independents. Climate becomes *the* issue. Progress finally begins. Hope stirs even among the most pessimistic of the Doomers.

The Democratic Party begins talks with Occupy about partnership/merging. The next president will likely not be a Democrat or a Republican. Mrs./Mr. Smith for President.