



## “Sustainability: A Community Approach”

The Sebastopol, CA Environmental Council

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Community sustainability can be a mixture of one or more of the following disciplines that can guide land-based decision making:

1. Permaculture (Nature-based community planning)
2. New Mythology (Community in the Hero's Journey)
3. Transition Town (Localization)
4. Regenerative Agriculture (Conservation and rehabilitation-centered)
5. Circular Economy (Re-Use, Recycle...)

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The Sebastopol, CA Environmental Council Story (fiction)

Sebastopol is a city in Sonoma County, in California with a recorded population of over 8000. Today, wine grapes are the predominant agriculture crop, and nearly all lands once used for orchards are now vineyards. The creation of The Barlow, a \$23.5 million mall on a floodplain at the edge of town, converted old agriculture warehouses into a trendy marketplace for fine dining, tasting rooms, and art, has made Sebastopol a popular Wine Country destination. Famous horticulturist Luther Burbank had gardens in this region. The city hosts an annual Apple Blossom Festival in April and is home to the Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sebastopol,\\_California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sebastopol,_California)

Danny has friends in the City and the country. Since Earth Day 1973, he has been an active member of the Sebastopol Environmental Council (SEC), building a coalition with eco-justice and sustainability. The EC espouses something called “whole systems thinking,” or factoring in all inputs and outputs of a system. Call it self-sufficiency. Inspired by the Transition movement, the SEC works on localization strategies, especially around food production and energy usage. The 37-member Council takes a conservation and rehabilitation first approach to food and farming systems, especially to grape growing. Challenging the monomyth of mythologist Joseph Campbell, Sebastopol is on a Community journey with stories that involve a community that goes on an adventure, is victorious in a decisive crisis, and comes out transformed. Sebastopol is building resilience to climate change and increasing biodiversity. The SEC teaches and practices **Regeneration** - using Nature to revitalize a

person or a system and **Recovering** or creating a healthy community and/or ecosystem. The Council seeks traditional or "natural" approaches to agriculture.

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## Definitions

Permaculture (Nature) is an approach to land management and settlement design that adopts **arrangements observed in flourishing natural ecosystems**. It includes a set of design principles derived using **whole-systems thinking**. It applies these principles in fields such as regenerative agriculture, town planning, rewilding, and **community resilience**. The term was coined in 1978 by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren, who formulated the concept in opposition to modern industrialized methods, instead adopting a more **traditional or "natural" approach to agriculture**.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permaculture>

New Mythology (Community in the Hero's Journey). Applying Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey to **Community journey**. The hero's journey, also known as the monomyth, is the common template of stories that involve **a community that goes on an adventure, is victorious in a decisive crisis, and is transformed**. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero%27s\\_journey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero%27s_journey)

Transition (Localization). The terms transition town, transition initiative and transition model refer to grassroot community projects that aim to increase **self-sufficiency**, to reduce the potential effects of peak oil, climate destruction, and economic instability through renewed **localization strategies, especially around food production and energy usage**. In 2006, the founding of Transition Town Totnes in the United Kingdom became an inspiration for other groups to form. The Transition Network charity was founded in early 2007, to support these projects. A number of the groups are officially registered with the Transition Network. Transition initiatives have been started in locations around the world, with many located in the United Kingdom and others in Europe, North America, and Australia. While the aims remain the same, **Transition initiatives' solutions are specific depending on the characteristics of the local area**. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transition\\_town](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transition_town)

Regenerative agriculture is a **conservation and rehabilitation approach to food and farming systems**. It focuses on topsoil regeneration, **increasing biodiversity**, improving the water cycle, enhancing ecosystem services, supporting bio-sequestration, **increasing resilience to climate change**, and strengthening the health and vitality of farm soil.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regenerative\\_agriculture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regenerative_agriculture)

Circular Economy. The six principles (R's) of the Circular Economy are defined as:

- **Retaining** - holding a vision for change
- **Rethinking** - being critical of the status quo
- **Regenerating** - using Nature to revitalize a person or a system
- **Reducing** - eliminating waste
- **Reusing** - putting manufactured resources back in the system rather than in the garbage
- **Recovering** - creating a healthy community and/or ecosystem

[https://willipaulstudio.com/pdf/Circular\\_Economy\\_Press\\_Release.pdf](https://willipaulstudio.com/pdf/Circular_Economy_Press_Release.pdf)