

DEEP ECOLOGY AND THE CONSERVATION OF ECUADOR RAINFORESTS by John Seed

John Seed is offering 2 deep ecology workshops on the N Coast this year [near Kyogle](#) (August 26-28) and near [Nimbin](#) (October 21-23). 25% of proceeds support the protection of Ecuadorean rainforests.

I have worked for worldwide rainforests since 1979. Although many of our efforts succeeded, for every forest saved 100 have disappeared. Clearly you can't save the planet one forest at a time. One green Earth or a bowl of dust. Without a profound change of consciousness we can kiss the forests goodbye, the ones we've "saved" alongside the rest.

Deep ecology is a key to the change we need. To deep ecology, underlying all the symptoms of the environmental crisis lies a psychological or spiritual root – the illusion of separation from the rest of the natural world which stems from anthropocentrism or human-centeredness.

Conditioned since the Old Testament to “subdue and dominate” nature, the modern psyche is radically alienated from the air, water and soil which underpin life and this is reflected in the rapid shredding of all natural systems in the name of economic development. Deep ecology reminds us that the world is not a pyramid with humans on top, but a web. We humans are but one strand in that web and as we destroy this web, we destroy the foundations for all complex life including our own.

While we maintain a self-image created in the matrix of anthropocentric culture, a shrunken and illusory sense of self that doesn't include the air and water and soil, we will experience nature as "outside" our self and fail to recognise that the nature "out there" and the nature "in here" are one and the same.

Many people INTELLECTUALLY realise that we are inseparable from Nature and that the sense of separation that we feel is socially conditioned and illusory.

The deep ecology workshops created by Joanna Macy and myself enable us to find an end to this illusion and EXPERIENCE our rootedness in the living Earth.

ECUADOR RAINFORESTS

The [Rainforest Information Centre](#) has been working to protect the [rainforests of Ecuador](#) since the 1980's. We helped establish the 7000 Ha [Los Cedros Biological Reserve](#) in 1988. Due to the tireless work of reserve director Jose Decoux, the reserve has flourished in spite of the degradation of most of the surrounding rainforests.

University of Oregon Professor Bitty Roy says that “Los Cedros is the best preserved rainforest in Western Ecuador” and Blanca Rios Touma PhD UCLA reports that Los Cedros is now the only intact watershed on the west side of Ecuador.

We have been “saving” Los Cedros ever since from a constant stream of threats – illegal logging, poaching, land development – but the most serious challenge was a corrupt government decision a few years ago that allowed mining in “Bosques

Protectores”. We raised about \$80,000 for a series of legal cases culminating in the decision by the Constitutional Court (the highest court in the land) to accept our argument that mining abrogated the “Rights of Nature” enshrined in Ecuador’s constitution.

As important as this decision is for Los Cedros (the mining companies have left at last!), the precedent this sets impacts over 2 million Ha of Bosques Protectores which are now under mining leases and the first of these have now initiated legal proceedings based on this precedent. RIC is now [fundraising to support these court proceedings](#) and our director, Liz Downes, is travelling to Ecuador to support more such actions.

RIC has been entirely run by volunteers since our inception in the Nightcap blockade 40 years ago. If you’d like to join us please email johnseed1@ozemail.com.au