

## Testimonial for John Seed

10 January 2025

It was in 1987 that I, as a young environmental philosopher, first met my esteemed colleague, John Seed, at an Ecopolitics conference at the University of Tasmania. I can testify from my long acquaintance with John that he has devoted his life, in a way that few others can equal, to the cause of protecting Earth from the myriad harms that modern civilization has visited upon it. For decades he has sought to communicate the madness of our present ecocidal trajectory not merely by insisting on the facts and figures of scientific evidence but by offering a luminous new perspective on human life and our place, as humans, in the larger scheme of things, via the philosophy of Deep Ecology. Deep Ecology was the brainchild of famous Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess. John has rescued it from the ivory tower and carried it down onto the streets, into the forests, conveying its message not merely intellectually but experientially and emotionally, through music, performance, story and direct encounters with wilderness. Through workshops and roadshows, he has galvanized generations of young people – many thousands of them over the years – to take up an ethos of Earth protection, seeing themselves not merely as external protectors of nature but as integral to it, as parts of nature themselves. As he likes to put it, “I am protecting the rainforest’ becomes ‘I am the rainforest protecting itself’”.

Not only has John ‘talked the talk’ however, he has also impeccably walked the talk in his own life. Through his long-time leadership of the Rainforest Information Centre, he has been instrumental in initiating and providing ongoing support for many successful community forest projects around the world. Moreover, he has always been ready to put his own body on the line for threatened ecosystems when necessary, protesting and literally manning the barricades when all else has failed.

In my view, John has shown himself, over more than 40 years, to be a *true philosopher*, in the ancient sense of that term. Like the Stoics and Epicureans of classical Greece, he has committed himself unwaveringly, in every aspect of his life, to the common good, in the only sense in which the common good can be understood in the present era of planetary systems collapse – as inclusive of the whole of Earth. He has done so not for material gain – he has never sought a settled salaried existence – nor for power or prestige, but simply because he is a thoughtful person who cannot turn away from what patently needs to be done at this critical moment in human history. It is ironic indeed that it is he – like another ancient philosopher, Socrates – who should end up in the seat of the accused, rather than those who turn away!

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