

ROAR - Seven Year Plan

What is ROAR?

ROAR (Religious Organizations Along the River), initiated in 1996, is a network of religious congregations and organizations with property in the Hudson Valley of New York State. Our mission statement follows:

As members of religious communities, conscious of our communion with the land we own in the Hudson River Bioregion, we believe:

- *that we share kinship with all creation;*
- *that human beings and the natural world must go into the future as a single sacred community or both will perish;*
- *and that the ecologically sound care of our lands is a God-given mission.*

Impelled by these beliefs and recognizing a time imperative, we come together to:

- *support one another in using our lands with an attitude of respect for the beauty and integrity of earth;*
- *collaborate with each other and learn together;*
- *address the interrelated issues of poverty, justice, and ecology in this bioregion.*

Drawing from our community traditions and experience, as well as from the new cosmology, we will channel our mutual efforts into education, motivation and advocacy. Grounded in the movements of contemplation and action, we will seek to collaborate with others who share common concerns and values. (May 20, 1998)

Introduction

ROAR members are grateful for the call by ARC/UNDP to develop a Seven Year Plan. The past and present efforts and future plans of ROAR incorporate many of the elements identified in the guidelines. We see the call to develop a Seven Year Plan as an opportunity for ROAR to respond with greater clarity of vision, renewed vigor, and in mutual support and encouragement with the larger community that is formed through the development of these plans.

Since 1996 major initiatives have been:

- Formal and informal education among ROAR members on: history and use of land owned by ROAR member congregations and deepening understanding of land use and ways to conserve and preserve land;
- Networking and sharing information with ROAR member congregations on environmental assessments, preservation efforts and other steps being done to assure sustainability;
- Development of ROAR Land Ethic Statement;
- Advocating for, and educating and assisting, ROAR member congregations and other groups to develop their own land ethic statement and land use policy;
- November 8-10, 2000 Conference, “Bridging Faith and Environment” convened religious leaders (clergy and lay) from different faith denominations to reflect together on the spiritual and ethical vision needed to address the ecological issues

- of our times, especially those of the Hudson River bioregion. Dr Larry Rasmussen, author of *Earth Community*, *Earth Ethics*, was presenter;
- Advocating Con Edison for the removal of PCBs (by networking and in collaboration with many organizations);
 - Education / advocacy on Indian Point issues (by networking and in collaboration with many organizations);
 - November 16, 2005 Conference on “Land Preservation: How & Why” at Garrison Institute where religious leaders and staffs of several environmental groups met to address preservation of land, overcoming obstacles and developing strategies for going forward;
 - Worked closely with Garrison Institute’s Initiative on the Hudson River Project: participated in the Hudson River Conversations; helped develop for Earth Day 2007, *Our Shared Nature: A Transformational Ecology Compact for the Hudson*; and, several ROAR members were on Hudson River Project Steering Committee;
 - Published “Grounded in the Gift of Our Lands: A Resource Book for Making Land Use Decisions” (October 2007);
 - November 7, 2007 Conference “Listening to Earth and Making Earth-friendly Decisions Regarding Land Use” facilitated by Sisters Margaret Galiardi, OP and Pat Siemen, OP. Invitations were sent to those in religious leadership, parish ministries, land stewardship and concerned about a sustainable future. Conference introduced Resource Book and offered theological reflections and practical applications around land use issues experienced by participants;
 - Collaborated and partnered with local and national organizations to address environmental issues around water, waste management, land use, etc;
 - Coordinated viewings of “Renewal” with local environmental groups and places of faith;
 - ROAR member congregations offer retreats, workshops, education and advocacy initiatives in areas of eco-spirituality and environmental justice.

Statement of Commitment

Recognizing the importance of having both a local and global awareness of issues, and in the context of its mission statement, ROAR is committed to:

- Living out its mission statement, especially in our relationship with the land that we “own” where land seen as subject, not object, fosters decisions based on respect and rights of all, including non-human communities of life;
- Networking and partnering with environmental groups and people of faith around key Hudson River Bioregion issues;
- Sustainability, especially around Earth’s natural resources, such as water, air, land, and, in particular, with properties “owned” and / or used by our congregations;
- Focusing on the following three areas (to be evaluated periodically):
 1. River issues, including pharmaceutical concerns;
 2. Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant;
 3. Land Use issues.

Target Population:

- Leadership of Member Congregations, and through them:
 - member congregations of ROAR who then disseminate information and educate their membership. Membership is requested to advocate and address issues;
 - interested people of faith, places of worship, and environmentalists.
- Partners who have philosophy and goals similar to ROAR, including: Hudson Riverkeeper; Sierra Club Lower Hudson Chapter; New York State Interfaith Power and Light; Sustainable Hudson Valley; Scenic Hudson; ROW (Religious Organizations on Water); Clearwater; and Garrison Institute and others.

General Statement

ROAR and its member congregations have been gifted to live along the majestic Hudson River and / or in the beautiful Hudson River bioregion rich in beauty, natural and spiritual resources. We strive to promote right relationships among all God's Creation, especially in this area which we call home. The Hudson River calls us to respond to the pressing issues and needs that it and the communities of life, including the human, face and that must be addressed if we are to go into a future that is life giving for future generations.

Specifically, we will:

1. Continue to work towards educating ROAR member congregations and their leadership on land use, conservation and easement rights with the goal of preserving land that is owned;
2. Inform, educate and advocate for local issues that address: rights of land, water and air; water quality; safety of Indian Point Nuclear Plant; sustainable practices; use of land "owned" and / or used by ROAR member Congregations;
3. Strengthen partnerships and collaborative efforts with appropriate national and local environmental groups and people of faith on above issues
4. Plan periodic educational and inspirational programs / workshops / retreats that bring together the membership of ROAR congregations, people of faith and environmentalists on above issues and in celebration of the Hudson River and its bioregion and the Great Work that is being done.

Methodologies that are / will be used:

- Rituals and Celebrations
- Assessment of issues and needs
- Networking
- Advocacy
- Education including experiential intuitive approach
- Ongoing development of and education on "Grounded in the Gift of Our Lands: A Resource Book for Land Use

Celebration of ROAR's 7 Year Plan

ROAR will celebrate its work and commitment to its Seven Year Plan in a ritual celebratory ceremony during 2010.

Approved by ROAR committee at September 17, 2009 meeting

Religious Organizations in ROAR (Religious Organizations Along the River)

Carmelite Sisters – Beacon

Catholic Worker Farm – Marlboro

Dominican Sisters of Hope

Dominican Sisters of Sparkill

Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers

Maryknoll Sisters

Passionist Brothers and Fathers of Riverdale, NY

Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary

Sisters of Charity of New York

Sisters of the Divine Compassion

Sisters of St. Dominic, Blauvelt, NY

Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace

Society of St. Ursula

The Religious of Jesus and Mary

Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union, Eastern Province of the US