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# BIOREGIONALISM

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*“...Life is a continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations... Living beings maintain a moving equilibrium in harmony with their changing environment by automatically effecting internal changes to counterbalance external ones. The ability to effect such counterbalancing adjustments promptly and adequately constitutes health.”*

S. Solis-Cohen –  
Pharmacotherapeutics, 1928





# There are three main goals of bioregionalism



**Restoration and Conservation** – The first and primary goal is restorative ecology, a way of living that seeks to restore and maintain local, natural systems including waters, watersheds, plants, soil ecology, and wildlife. This is an active process of conservation and healing. A bioregional worldview places highest importance on the health of the natural terrain, whether that terrain is comprised of wilderness, suburbs or cities. The focus is on restoring the natural integrity of the region.



**Local Resourcing** – The second goal is to work towards providing basic needs: food, water, housing, energy and commodities to the inhabitants of the region in sustainable ways from within the region. This is becoming a somewhat more popular idea now with the proliferation of farmers' markets, CSA's and restaurants featuring local foods. But there is still little awareness about our soils or our waters – where they come from and where they go when we flush them away – and we live in ways that are divorced from these issues. The loss of habitat and the extinction of species are abstract concepts when we can get our food from a supermarket and our water from a tap. But when we begin to source our basic human needs locally, it becomes imperative to pay close attention to climate, weather, growing season, and health of the land.



**Education and Re-inhabitation** – Thirdly, bioregionalism works to support proactive education, employment and re-inhabitation of the land. To this end, educational curricula of all levels are designed to teach the importance of the natural world and our relationship to it. The goal of re-inhabitation is a long-view goal, perhaps taking a century or more to implement fully. It includes fostering an understanding of the history of the region along with knowledge of the land.

Bioregionalism fosters a kind of stewardship of the earth that has been sorely lacking during the last several generations. It is a vision for healing the earth while also creating better living for ourselves. It is not about relinquishing technology or culture, but about living on the earth in ways that do not exceed the carrying capacity of the land and developing ways of drawing on the local resources without also using up those areas as living space. It is not only the natural terrain and animal life that defines a region, but also human culture. A bioregional worldview includes cities as important structures and as centers of culture and commerce. The use of technology is included in a bioregional vision if it is sustainable or contributes to a vision of sustainability. Living within the cycles of nature there is a place for innovation, but without exploitation. In fact, we most likely cannot survive the environmental predicament we are now in without many technological solutions.

Each bioregion is both independent and self-sustaining but also interdependent with other regions. Networks of water, migrating birds and animals, winds and weather patterns cross natural boundaries so that each region can affect the next positively or negatively. But the most important aspect of a bioregional worldview is the idea that we, as human beings, take into account our right relationship with the place we live, understanding that our region can provide us with most, if not all, of what we need.

Our own wellbeing is ultimately dependent on the wellbeing of our environment. Living locally, eating the foods, drinking the waters and using the medicinal plants of our region will help to keep us healthier as individuals and also help us to re-inhabit the place we live with a more physical, cellular, and natural connection.

“...when one comes into a city to which he is a stranger, he ought to consider its situation, how it lies as to the winds and the rising of the sun; for its influence is not the same whether it lies to the north or the south, to the rising or to the setting sun. These things one ought to consider most attentively, and concerning the waters which the inhabitants use, whether they be marshy and soft, or hard, and running from elevated and rocky situations, and then if saltish and unfit for cooking; and the ground, whether it be naked and deficient in water, or wooded and well watered, and whether it lies in a hollow, confined situation, or is elevated and cold; and the mode in which the inhabitants live, and what are their pursuits...” – Hippocrates 400BC

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## AUTHOR

"If we listen with all of who we are and allow a deeper connection with nature, creation, and purpose we could continue the powerful work of integrating ecology, theology, and collective healing as a sacred path to gentle, effective restoration and wholeness for ourselves and for the earth."



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