Permaculture Project Intake Outline & Questionnaire

The intent of permaculture is to create a lifestyle that is abundant, self-sustaining and also regenerative to the intermingling and surrounding ecosystems.

Design Process Steps

Part 1 - Getting Started

Questionnaire and Consultation

1. Complete the questionnaire. The design questionnaire is intended to gather as much information as possible about the project, the vision, wants and needs around it.
2. Schedule an onsite consultation (2-3 hours). We will review and evaluate the questionnaire in relation to what is possible on your land.
3. Consider further design needs and scope of the design project and if further design or consulting is needed.

Part 2 - The Design

1) : Create a base map and survey the site.

The base map is a detailed accounting of what is already existing on the site. The mapping phase can include contour maps, geological maps, climate maps, etc.

The site survey is an accounting of all other relevant data that may pre-exist on the site but can not be included on the base map.

2) : Review of base map and questionnaire.

This is a conversation and dialog to asses the best options based on the information already gathered. This is a good time to focus on priorities and time-lines.

3) : Draft design proposals.

Generate proposals that fit with the clients vision, wants and needs.

The proposals will usually be in the form of maps, plans and drawings with detailed write-ups.

4) : Review of proposals.

We will review and evaluate the various design proposals, modify them as needed and look toward final designs.

5) : Final designs

The final design will be presented according to the needs of the project. Possible assets include: detailed write ups, photos, videos, a web-site, diagrams, maps, implementation and maintenance prioritization and time-lines, species lists and plant source lists, costing analysis etc.

Part 1:

Design Project Intake Questionnaire

The following questions will enable the design team to understand a potential project prior to beginning design work. Please answer in as much detail as possible. The scale and purpose of your project may make some of the questions and areas more relevant than others to you.

Vision:

State as clearly as possible the overall vision for your site or project.

What duration are you going to be involved in this project?

What degree of detail /presentation do you need for your project?

Professional architectural drawings or construction plans.

Formal presentation for grant funding or other business purposes.

Less formal maps or presentations for personal use.

Phone or email consultation only.

Other, please describe:

Location:

Size:

Climate:

Goals: What would you like to achieve?

Please consider what goals you may have in the following areas and short, medium, or long term? :

Self-sufficiency

To what degree would you like to be self-sufficient and in what areas?

Water, energy, food, money

If self-sufficiency is one of your main goals then what do you like to eat and in what quantities?

Water

Domestic use, drinking, heating, bathing, grey/black water etc.

Farm use, Irrigation, dams, ponds, tanks,

Aesthetic/recreation use, fountains, swimming pools etc.

Access

Roads, paths, etc.

Structures

Buildings, houses, sheds, fences etc.

Energy efficient building, natural building

What are your goals and desired comfort level for your structures? (heating, cooling, ventilation, fire proofing.)

Gardens

Veggie gardens

Annual crops

Perennial crops

Composting

Worm farms

Trees, shrubs

Orchards, vineyards, food forests, timber

Lawn

Privacy

Waste

Environmental mitigation and microclimate management

wind, sun, flood, drought, fire, frost

Animals

Small scale

Medium size farming/family farm

Broad acre

Play/recreation

Children, guests

Aesthetics

Are you concerned with how your property looks from the outside?

How would you like it to look and feel from the inside?

What kind of aesthetic would you like for your project on an overall basis and for individual areas within the site. (Ordered, classical, neat, rustic, modern, orderly chaos, natural, wild, etc.)

What do you find aesthetically pleasing? Displeasing?

Education

Learning/teaching opportunities

Businesses

Farming, livestock, residences, healing-centers, etc.

Nature conservation, ecosystem regeneration, wildlife.

Community

How involved would you like to be with your community and neighbors?

Are you building for a community or intend to foster community?

Resources

Time

How much time do you have available to work on your site?

What pattern would you like your time to take? From a few hours daily, large weekend blocks, to full time work.

Intended time away, vacation, travel, business etc.

Consider assessing your weekly schedule and see if there is room for the time you would like to spend on your project.

Energy

How much energy do you have to put in?

Health, strength, etc.

Skills

Do you have the skills to do the things you want to do?
What do you enjoy doing?

Are you able to spend time learning new skills? (remember to note this in the time section above.)

How much contract or hired help would you be willing to employ?

Do you have the option for volunteer help, or community, neighbor or family help? (Example: hold a weekend workshop on small home gardens, and invite your community to participate.)

Personnel

How many people live or work on the site?

Budget

Quantity

Pattern of use. Monthly, yearly, initial investment, future windfall.

Existing resources.

Community

Are there aspects or ways that the community can be a resource?

Some general questions:

What do you really like about your site? Dislike?

What do you want to keep as it is? Change?

What works best or is the most difficult?

_____

Part 2 - The Design

Base Map - The base map is the first part of a more formal design process.

The base map can be a cooperative effort between the client and design team. In many cases a Google map will serve as the starting point. On land with more complex topography or if keyline work, or extensive pond and swale systems are an option, a 1m or .5m topographical map is a good investment.

Items to include in basemap:

Boundaries - internal and external.

walls, fences, hedges etc.

Buildings, and specific building systems.

Energy (heating, cooling, electric), access, water, waste.

Access

Roads, paths, doors, windows

Plants

On a larger scale they can be noted as types of vegetation or groups of plants

Smaller sites can list and locate individual species.

Water

Broad: Ponds, streams, springs, mains, marshes, dams, etc.

Small: Taps, downpipes, roof tanks, grey water

Soil

Type: sand, gravel, clay, pH, mineral content, microbiology etc

Landform

Degree of slope, aspect, contours

Microclimate

Shade, sun, partial sun

Infrastructure

Power-lines, sewer, phone etc.

Evaluate existing elements and systems according to:

Productivity

Waste

Inputs/outputs

Expenses

Human interaction

Site survey

The site survey will contain information that is key to the site and design, but may not be included on the base map. The site survey can be done cooperatively between the client and design team, the more information the client is able to provide the fewer hours the design team will have to spend.

History

How was this land used in the past?
How many owners have occupied it?

What might it have looked like prior to any human use?

Soils

Type, mineral content, nutrient content, structure.

Biodiversity

Animal habitat, endangered species or plants on site.

Landform details

Altitude, steepness, solar aspect, erodibility, water storage potential

Climate data

Highs, lows, averages, rain, drought, climate change trends

Growing seasons

Hazards

Wind, storm, fire, flood data

Microclimate data

Wind directions and season, frost pockets, etc.

Off site assets

Buss stops, schools, highways, shops, national forests, parks, etc.

Aesthetics

Good views, bad views etc.

Design Proposal

The design proposal is presented to the client after considering all the previous information and forming it into a cohesive design map and written or verbally communicated plan.

The proposal can address these areas:

Aims:

What does the client want to achieve - specifically.

Concepts:

Methods, themes, strategies, theories, style and layouts for achieving the aims.

Details:

Exact definitions, plans, planting list, species, step by step instructions, costing, spacing, suppliers, timelines, implementation plans, maintenance plans, yield estimates, rainfall calculations, architectural plans etc.

Priorities and timelines:

Some things must come before others.

Workload patterns:

Harvest times, maintenance, planting, pruning etc.

Workload patterns can be divided and applied to each proposed system: Animals, trees, crops, structures etc.

Costing:

Estimates or exact sums for the project.

Additional Notes, questions, comments