

## CHAPTER 10: NUCLEAR GUARDIANSHIP

**Origin of Nuclear Guardianship:** In the early 1990s eco-philosopher Joanna Macy of Berkeley, CA, a long-time friend, gathered about her a group of people concerned about all aspects of the nuclear issue. Over the years they produced the following "Ethic of Nuclear Guardianship."

### **Ethic of Nuclear Guardianship -- Values to Guide Decision-Making on the Management of Radioactive Materials:**

1. Each generation shall endeavor to preserve the foundations of life and well-being for those who come after. To produce and abandon substances that damage following generations is morally unacceptable.
2. Given the extreme toxicity and longevity of radioactive materials, their production must cease. The development of safe, renewable energy sources and non-violent means of conflict resolution is essential to the health and survival of life on Earth. Radioactive materials are not to be regarded as an economic or military resource.
3. We accept responsibility for the nuclear materials produced in our lifetimes and those left in our safekeeping.
4. Future generations have the right to know about the nuclear legacy bequeathed to them and to protect themselves from it.
5. Future generations have the right to monitor and repair containers, and to apply such technologies as may be developed to protect the biosphere more effectively. Deep burial of radioactive materials precludes these possibilities and risks uncontrollable contamination to life support systems.
6. Transport of radioactive materials, with its inevitable risks of accidents and spills, should be undertaken only when conditions at the current site pose a greater ecological hazard than transportation.
7. Research and development of technologies for the least hazardous long-term treatment and placement of nuclear materials should receive high priority in funding and public attention.
8. Education of the public about the character, source, and containment of radioactive materials is essential for the health of present and future generations. This education should promote understanding of our relationship to the Earth and to time.
9. The formation of policies governing the management of radioactive materials requires full participation of the public. Free circulation of information and open communication are indispensable for the self-protection of present and future generations.
10. The vigilance necessary for ongoing containment of radioactive materials requires a moral commitment. This commitment is within our capacity, and can be developed and sustained by drawing on the cultural and spiritual resources of our human heritage.

(The Nuclear Guardianship Ethic is proposed as an evolving expression of values to guide decision-making on the management of radioactive materials. Copyright 1994 Nuclear Guardianship Project on The Responsible Care of Radioactive Materials, a Project of The Tides Foundation, 1400 Shattuck Avenue #41, Berkeley, CA 94709 USA. tel: 510-524-9971, email: [ngp@igc.apo.org](mailto:ngp@igc.apo.org). This document may be reproduced for educational purposes with the full inclusion of address line shown above.)

**Rocky Flats Nuclear Guardianship:** In the summer of 2010 I was invited by Anne Waldman to give a presentation on Rocky Flats for the Summer Writing Program at Naropa University. There was so much interest after the presentation that several things came together. First, the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center (RMPJC) decided that from January to June 2011 it would hold a series of workshops and presentations on Nuclear Guardianship at Naropa University. For the last session in June 2011 Joanna Macy led a Guardianship workshop. Two quick results were, first, RMPJC would turn its long focus on Rocky Flats into the Rocky Flats Nuclear Guardianship (RFNG) and Naropa University would found The Joanna Macy Center as an academic program.

The RFNG meant an explicit commitment to the Guardianship Ethic for our work on Rocky Flats and nuclear weapons. We began a regular schedule of a two-hour meeting every Tuesday at noon, development of a web site focused on Rocky Flats, support of other groups with their own specific approach to Rocky Flats. Out of this came a specific program to Keep Kids Off Rocky Flats (KKORF), beginning with appeals to school boards not to allow their students to go on school field trips to the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. To date (February 2018) five school boards have made this commitment; none have declined. Of course, we want the Refuge closed, period – not just for the young but for everyone (see pp. 104, 124).

Our other focus at present is to stop construction of the Jefferson Parkway. Earlier it was reported that the Parkway may fail for lack of investors (see pp. 110-112). But if they get the funds and decide to construct the road, this will invite nonviolent civil disobedience. If this happens, we will be ready. We will teach civil disobedience.