

SPIRIT of LEGACY PROJECT

A Call to Legacy Practice: Creative Generosity on Behalf of the Future

February 1, 2007

“We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future...To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny.”

- Earth Charter

OVERVIEW

How can future generations be heard *now*? Can we learn new ways of living with the welfare of the whole Earth Community and its future in our minds and hearts? As much of the world is now turning to these questions, *The Spirit of Legacy Project* is poised to make a vital contribution as we all face new environmental imperatives. The project addresses this critical moment in history offering four unique areas of action, each with a set of tasks and programs:

1. The Awakening Message
2. A Sacred Place of Learning
3. The Deepening Spirit
4. The Fellowship of the Journey

This project is underway with many parts yet to be implemented over the next three years. Designed by Fritz and Vivienne Hull, the *Spirit of Legacy* is a project of the Whidbey Institute.

VISION

At this pivotal time in Earth's history we, as the human community, must think and act on behalf of the future as never before. Each new report on the health of the environment, including global warming, appears more serious than the last. Fortunately, there is abundant evidence that a new ecological vision and a hope-filled energy are rising in the world. As the crisis is now being engaged with increased concern and action a unique moment is upon us. The *Spirit of Legacy Project* calls for a heightened awareness of both our dilemma and our capacity to engage it creatively. This project is committed to personal and collective "legacy practice," a conscious caring for the future as our sacred responsibility.

The spirit of this project is one of gratefulness for the beauty of the world, belief in a positive message, and a willingness to work hard to restore health to the natural world and preserve it for future generations. With many colleagues and associations old and new, in a hope-filled consciousness, and in the deep power of the Chinook land as a home base, this new project is moving forth.

The Earth Charter offers a compelling reflection of the vision and substance of the *Spirit of Legacy Project*: "It is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations." Additional imperatives from the Earth Charter speak to us in a similar way:

- Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.
- Recognize that the freedom of action of each generation is qualified by the needs of future generations.
- Transmit to future generations values, traditions, and institutions that support the long-term flourishing of Earth's human and ecological communities.
- Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.

We who are initiating this project are in association with a number of creative new endeavors where the environment is being addressed, the disciplines of deepening the inner life are encouraged, and people are affirming the truth and nobility of their lives. In the belief that a truly healthy legacy for future generations must be created in our time we stand with all those who declare with power our responsibility for all that we believe in, and to act on behalf of a vibrant future for the Earth community.

As we do this work we hold in our hearts and minds a great vision of life itself, and its successful continuation long into the future. This vision is informed by the story of the universe, the story of Earth, and humankind now poised at a critical point of emergence and influencing how this story unfolds. We hold as well a specific vision of a spirited company and network of people who are learning new ways of *remembering the future*, of thinking and making choices. “The dream drives the action,” writes Thomas Berry. We believe this is true for both the big dream beginning with the evolution of the universe, and for our piece of the action, right here, right now.

The *Spirit if Legacy Project* is conceived and directed by Fritz and Vivienne Hull in association with many friends and in partnership with the Whidbey Institute. It is built upon 40 years of vision and experience as founders and directors of the Chinook Learning Center and the Whidbey Institute. It continues a long commitment to “Earth, Spirit and the Human Future.”

MISSION

The mission of the Spirit of Legacy Project is to reach into our region and beyond to engender legacy practice: creative generosity on behalf of the future.

The *Spirit of Legacy Project* is an instrument to help bring forth a passionate commitment to learning and teaching conscious caring for the future through action in the most practical and personal terms.

The focus of this project is *legacy* – the gift to the future that our generation will bequeath the world and the generations to come. Legacy for us is the work of receiving from the past, from the Earth, from others, and giving to the future. We are here to pass our inheritance on into the future enriched with our own contribution.

The word legacy carries for us the following particular importance:

- Legacy is the 13.7 billion year story of the unfolding universe and humankind is an integral part of this development and critical to the next phase of evolution.
- Legacy is spiritually informed personal responsibility for creating a life that counts, that contributes to the general welfare of the Earth Community, believing that who we are, our personal *being*, matters.
- Legacy is specific acts of passing values, traditions, creative endeavors, and institutions to future generations that contribute to a truly sustainable and life-enhancing culture.

- Legacy is a new cultural mindfulness, the critical ability for us to make a social contract with the future, and to live and make decisions with the future in our hearts and minds.

While “legacy” can often suggest something to think about in later years, this project is directed toward younger people as well as older. We will take on the challenge of finding strategies for reaching to young adults who are searching for meaningful ways to live and make choices that serve a greater purpose. We are seeking to make a cross-generational step in consciousness and action.

The *Spirit of Legacy Project* places clear and careful emphasis on “Spirit.” This word first suggests the embodiment or presence of the deepest and most honored values that we carry as human beings. The word Spirit also carries a theological and spiritual potency, encouraging us to call upon the powers that brought the universe into being to teach us and show us the way into the future. The spiritual dimension is deeply imbedded in all programs of this project.

The leading edge of this project is the cultivation of *creative generosity on behalf of the future*. Because humankind’s responsibility for the future of the Earth is historically unprecedented, so is our need to see and hold the future with unprecedented compassion. A profound spirit of generosity towards the future is the compassionate response to the growing fear and pessimism about what may lie ahead. Being creative with our generosity means that we have to invent the new expressions, the new channels, the new values that will break the old patterns of selfishness and the unwillingness to consider the long-term consequences of our attitudes and actions. Creative generosity is a living and vital energy that requires a compassionate outlet. At its deepest levels it is a Spirit-inspired or sacred activity.

With each passing day global warming and other destructive environmental trends are being accepted as extremely serious. So now is the time to act, and every action matters. Now is the time to change the cultural course. Most of all it is essential now to contribute to a climate of confidence, hope and creative action.

“What did you do, once you knew?” is a line from the hip-hop poet Drew Dillinger speaking of the environmental crisis. This question sums up what is burning at the heart of the mission of the *Spirit of Legacy Project*.

The mission of the *Spirit of Legacy Project* is ambitious, yet focused and real. As the word enthusiasm means literally in the Greek “God within,” we are enthusiastic and we are wholeheartedly committed to this project.

How will the mission of the *Spirit of Legacy Project* take form? What will it do? Through four new action areas, each a new venture, we will reach into our region and beyond.

ACTION-THE FOUR NEW VENTURES

The *Spirit of Legacy Project* is an integral pattern of four basic elements that together comprise the fully developed project. Each venture carries an inherent link with work accomplished over 40 years that expresses a long-held vision. Each venture also represents new thinking and new collaborative efforts. The four ventures focus in different but related ways on the creation of legacy practice.

1. The Awakening Message

The need is great in this culture to contribute to a movement of hope. Analysis, criticism and worry are not adequate to change the cultural course. Needed now is a message of authentic hope that is articulated with clarity, coherence and power. The emerging place of the human in the universe story is the primary grounding of this message. The message is a *call* to awaken to the joy and responsibility of being alive at this moment in Earth's history.

The *Spirit of Legacy Project* has already outlined a core message:

- A hope-filled vision and energy is entering the world
- The guidance, inspiration and power we need are available to us
- A change of heart and mind is needed at this moment in Earth's history
- The way forward is together as a whole Earth Community

A team will be formed to study and craft core concepts of a message of hopefulness that includes a summons to action. The team will interact with all *Spirit of Legacy* programs to engender contributions that shape this message as an ongoing process in which participants feel ownership. The team will use the internet to solicit contributions from the collective intelligence of a large number of participants. The outcome will be a shared vision and articulation of a shared message. The Earth Charter is a good model of shared vision and message. The team will work in Story House and build there a permanent resource library on the subject of hope. The team will create the means by which this message will travel far.

Publications are also planned and a periodic newsletter will be sent to a growing constituency of all those related to programs in *Spirit of Legacy*. At present the following is being planned:

Collaborative work on an awakening message
begins 2007 with the formation of a study-writing team
Invitations to other organizations to join in the process, 2008
Researching how the media can carry this shared message, 2008
Chinook: The Vision and the Place – The Story of the Land, written
in 2007
Spirit of Legacy Project newsletter, monthly as email blogsite 2007
A study guide on “legacy practice” written with widespread use in
groups
Periodic email circulation of the work accomplished by the team on
Awakening Message

2. A Sacred Place of Learning

The *Spirit of Legacy Project* has a remarkably suited home base, the new Story House at the edge of a meadow deep in the forest. This quiet setting enables people to open, hear and respond to the *call* – the awakening message. The surrounding natural world *initiates* us into the experience of the larger life that sustains us physically and spiritually. From this modest but strategic base in the forest the work goes forth.

The land is part of Whidbey Institute’s Chinook Center with its beautiful fields, trees, meadows, wetlands and buildings. A portion of the Chinook land is owned and stewarded by the Hulls, and like all the land it is dedicated to serving “Earth, Spirit and the Human Future.” For many years the Hulls have cared for this portion of the land, built trails, and conducted various learning experiences. They will continue to enhance this area as a powerful learning environment.

Thomas Berry reminds us over and over that what we must now seek is a “mutually enhancing” relationship with the Earth. It is essential to our health and survival as a flourishing Earth community. A new communion experience with nature is both humankind’s joy and responsibility.

Story House, a “classroom in the forest,” has been built by the Hulls in a powerful natural setting. It serves as the primary gathering place for the *Spirit of Legacy Project*. It is a good environmental statement. It is off the grid. When totally complete it will have solar power, wood heat, rain water collection from the roof, and a self-composting toilet. It is reconstructed from a shelter made of nearby trees that were harvested by horse logging. It is well insulated with a floor of recycled lumber. Story House is somewhat removed with no other structures in the area and is well suited for reflective learning, contemplative retreats and learning from the natural environment that is right outside the door.

Story House is a place dedicated to learning and telling the Universe Story, the Earth Story, the story of the human journey, and the story of each of our individual lives. The profound interdependence of these stories is integral to the *Spirit of Legacy Project*. Story House will continue to be developed as a unique resource-rich learning environment.

Story House is already a place where people come together for times of sacred ceremony, music, sharing of personal stories, physical work, sharing of food, celebrations, and learning through programs. This land and its trails and facilities will grow as a place of deep importance to many hundreds of people, a place of affection, inspiration and shared involvement.

Creating this place of sacred learning is a work in progress as listed below. What has already been accomplished is designated with a bullet. What is in the imagination only or a planning stage is shown without a bullet.

- The 37-acre eastern portion of Chinook land established as a unique area of forest stewardship for environmental learning, courses, events and retreats. Owned by the Hulls and a friend
 - Story House basic completion
 - A system of trails
 - Forest stewardship learned through Island County courses
 - Working with the Whidbey Institute toward possibly creating a natural “preserve” and planning future land ownership, (see separate paper on The Earth & Spirit Preserve)
- Environmental displays, special learning areas, nature awareness events and courses, family camping
An addition to Story House with small library, displays, kitchen, study area, and small out-buildings
Construction of additional trails, camping area, water system

3. The Deepening Spirit

Responding to the *call*, and being *initiated* into the power of the natural world, what wants to follow is a *deepening experience*.

We need new levels of depth in our thinking, in our spiritual lives and in our creative efforts. Legacy practice requires a new level of paying attention and reflective thoughtfulness. At times it requires a stepping aside from the intense speed of everything and to sense into the “long wave.” It asks us to study and read together. It means writing, and spiritual and theological reflection. Practices of prayer, meditation, journaling, observing the natural world, and “creative brooding” are all needed.

Spirit of Legacy programs are designed to pursue depth in our understanding of issues including global warming, and in our discernment of how we can respond in an enlightened spirit. All programs emphasize spiritual empowerment and sacred responsibility. Again, a number of programs are now underway (with bullet), and several new ones are under consideration (no bullet).

Integral Spirit

This program will begin its third year in September 2007 and ends in April. It is sub-titled: *Journey Into Wholeness and Sacred Responsibility*. It is designed for sixteen participants and meets in Story House. The emphasis is on the deep issues of personal life and faith, the cosmic story, and legacy practice. It works especially with four practices: gratefulness, confidence, creativity and generosity. For a full explanation of this program and pictures please visit the web site: www.integralspirit.org

- Integral Spirit 1 – pilot course, 2004-2005
- Integral Spirit 2, 2005-2006
- Newsletter to Integral Spirit Community
Integral Spirit 3, 2007-2008 (after revision of course in 2007)
Integral Spirit book published, 2008

Iona Pilgrimage

Each year new programs are created by Vivienne Hull, Director of Iona Pilgrimage, that take participants to the Island of Iona in Scotland. Programs include an emphasis on legacy practice.

For over thirty five years the Hulls have designed and directed annual pilgrimages and retreats on the Island of Iona in Scotland. Hundreds of people from across the continent and other parts of the world have participated in these gatherings. They include men and women from diverse professions, communities, and faith traditions. For many, their lives have been profoundly impacted by their experiences on Iona. Special invitational retreats have also brought to Iona members of the board and staff of Chinook and the Whidbey Institute for spiritual deepening, visioning, and planning.

Only three miles long and a mile and a half wide, the influence of Iona over the centuries has far exceeded its size. It is rugged and beautiful and known since ancient time as place of unique spiritual presence and power. As the home of one of the most influential of the early Irish monastic schools, Iona was acclaimed throughout Europe as the home of Celtic Christianity and a center of enlightenment and hope. Programs on Iona draw from this life-celebrating and Earth-honoring legacy and the wisdom it offers for the renewal and reshaping of spiritual life today.

Individuals are also encouraged to take retreat time on Iona on their own, and Vivienne Hull consults with several each year including clergy. Over the years there have been numerous church and university groups that have contracted for specialized experiences led by the Hulls.

For a full explanation of this program and pictures please visit the web site: www.ionaretreats.com

- Annual Women's Retreat, May 2007, led by Vivienne Hull and Sheila Kelly
- Health Care Professionals: *Healing and the Soul* (with Harmony Hill Retreat Center), May 2007
- Special Retreat led by Vivienne Hull and Susan Osborn: *Creative Life* May 2007
- Annual Iona Women's Reunions, fall and spring in Seattle
- Video produced: *Iona and the Celtic Way*
The Iona Legacy – Vivienne's writing published
New programs each year for the foreseeable future
Contract retreats – various churches and organizations

Thomas Berry Legacy - Annual Program

In the fall of 2007 a major new program will begin. It will honor Thomas Berry, who has been a profound personal influence on the life and thinking of Chinook and the Whidbey Institute, and for whom the main hall at the institute is named. Each fall a similar program will be held. Components of the program for fall of 2007 include:

- Conference of North American Earth & Spirit Center directors
- Dedication of Story House
- A day of public presentation on the Universe Story by Brian Swimme
Course on *The Spiritual Significance of the New Cosmology* for clergy and religious educators.
A cluster of events of other organizations during the fall of 2007 responding to the overarching theme: *The Resurgence of Hope*, keying off the major themes of the Thomas Berry Legacy Program

Women's Journey – A Seasonal Retreat Program

- After successful retreats at the Chinook Center and Harmony Hill Retreat Center, Sheila Kelly and Vivienne Hull are offering a new program centering on the theme of *Celtic Spirituality* held in Story House beginning fall of 2007

Story Chair

- Periodic gatherings in Story House where friends share deeply of their own faith journey

Ritual and ceremony

- Winter Solstice Celebration, annual winter fire ceremony and dedication to the “great work”
Holding Council, gatherings for “listening to the field” and strategizing for action
Universe Communion, a new liturgy for Earth, Spirit and the Human Future

Contract events

- Retreat for the Healing Ground Center in North Carolina, at Story House, June 2007
- A day with a student retreat from Macalester College
A New Gateway, a one-day introduction to the Universe Story – Earth Story, for groups responding to the personal and social implications of the new cosmology and the human future.

Additional program possibilities

As the project gains momentum and creative forces are at play among a growing number of individuals, more programs and activities will emerge. They will support the vision and action of the *Spirit of Legacy Project* and augment other programs of the Whidbey Institute.

4. The Fellowship of the Journey

Following the *call*, the *initiating* experience of nature, the *deepening* of our understanding, is the sustained *action* of a company of people.

The *Spirit of Legacy Project* is committed to bringing forth a new community of consciousness and practice to be known at this point as the Fellowship of the Journey. We agree with Thomas Berry when he says: “We will either travel *together* into the future, or perish separately in the desert.” Held together in love and hopeful spirit this new community and broader network will be dedicated to personal and collective declaration of legacy practice.

The quest for community has a long history at Chinook and Whidbey Institute, including the recent programs Spirited Work and Our Way Forward. We have learned a great deal over the years. This should serve us well in this new time as this quest continues with new and very effective forms arising from many people's efforts.

The *Spirit of Legacy Project* will give shape to a community that is open and inviting, spiritually informed, and loving and caring for the natural world. It will call people into making a commitment to each other as a fellowship, and to a common journey of creative responsibility for the vibrancy of the Earth community. It will set the intention for remaining strong many years into the future. Established with a clear and compelling sense of mission and outward focus it will be basically self-organizing and "leaderful."

The famed astrophysicist Stephen Hawking recently asked online: "In a world that is in chaos politically, socially and environmentally, how can the human race sustain another 100 years?" The *Spirit of Legacy Project* agrees with those who see the next one hundred years as critical to the survival of civilization as we have known it. This project calls people to join with the children, the next generations, to create new patterns of thought and choice that have the future in mind. This includes a specific call to community as a demanding journey into the future. It is a call to community that exceeds what can be accomplished in anyone's lifetime and is committed to a purpose and a task larger than ourselves. It is a commitment to the "great work," a work that will require a *journey of a hundred years*.

Already underway is the Promise to the Future initiative, inviting individuals to sign a declaration of intent with regard to the future. It is attached to this document. It can potentially reach to many people.

Steps are also underway toward the creation of this fellowship, and much is yet to be imagined.

- Promise to the Future, a pledge of responsibility
 - Creating network relationships with other organizations and movements, establishing an expectation and energy of confluence with others
 - Creating shared vision and practice in all the *Spirit of Legacy Project* programs that engender the development of this new community
- Fellowship of the Journey, a new form of community 2008,
preceded by study and careful attunement among many people
A paper on community written and distributed as a study document to engender careful thought about how to imagine and plan a new community of consciousness and practice.

ORGANIZATION

The *Spirit of Legacy Project* is designed by the Hulls and they serve as the primary staff, Fritz as the director. In the future an administrative associate will be added, and perhaps other staff. The organizational systems will be strong but minimalist, placing resources as much as possible in programs and outreach projects. A group of “thinking partners” forms the immediate community of friends helping to initiate this project. Over time a core leadership community will be developed. The four new ventures will be organized through specific teams.

The project is organized under the Whidbey Institute and its 501-c-3 non-profit status. It is responsible to the Institute’s Board of Directors. All legal and fiduciary responsibilities are collaborative and held in the framework of the Institute. In addition to using Story House the project will hold programs in Thomas Berry Hall, the Sanctuary, the Farmhouse and Granny’s at the Chinook Center. On occasion programs at the Chinook Center will use Story House and its surrounding forest. The relationship between the *Spirit of Legacy Project* and the rest of the Whidbey Institute is a strong and mutually enhancing partnership. Fritz Hull is the Founding Director of the Whidbey Institute. The Hulls are owners of Story House and owners with a friend of the land on which they intend to form an ecological “preserve.”

Initial funding for this project has come from the Hulls and from the *Spirit of Legacy Project* program tuitions. Grants will be written in the next two years with Whidbey Institute to develop the *Spirit of Legacy Project*. General fundraising will be undertaken in the spring of 2007 reaching to friends, program participants, and a broader constituency built over time. Budgets for the project and for each program are available for any who wish to see them.

We believe strongly in big dreams and a “going for it” attitude, and will at the same time proceed carefully only as funds are available. We know that this project must succeed on a flexible and buoyant financial base. This project is designed so that it can readily develop and expand from the base outlined in this paper. We will seek significant financial support so that the *Spirit of Legacy Project* can grow into a vibrant and effective instrument of transformation.

Information of the *Spirit of Legacy Project* is available to the public on the web: www.spiritoflegacy.com.

THE FUTURE of the SPIRIT of LEGACY PROJECT

A personal word from Fritz & Vivienne Hull

In the past 40 years we have founded and developed with many friends the Chinook Learning Center and the Whidbey Institute, and in time, have passed our leadership to others. This effort to transfer leadership has met with varying degrees of success. As the *Spirit of Legacy Project* now takes form we are mindful that once again, in time, we will pass the leadership to others. We feel it is too soon to know exactly how or when this will occur, but when the time comes we have plenty of experience to call upon! In the future the *Spirit of Legacy Project* could remain part of Whidbey Institute or, if all agreed, it could someday become a separate non-profit organization.

We are currently in the process of discerning the future ownership of the land and Story House. It has long been imagined that someday the Whidbey Institute might want to purchase some of this land and to integrate its use and stewardship with the rest of the lands and programs of the Chinook Center. This will be for the Whidbey Institute and our family someday to determine. The land could be placed under the Whidbey-Camano Land Trust in a manner similar to other portions of the Chinook Land. It could also belong to a new organization specifically created to steward the land and to further its use as a center for Earth & Spirit studies.

As we further develop the *Spirit of Legacy Project* we are deeply mindful of our own legacy. We look to the 40 years of service with the Chinook Learning Center and the Whidbey Institute, the lands and buildings, and the collaborative work with so many people, as the heart of our own legacy. We have now begun another adventure, and this too requires the discipline of legacy practice. We have launched this new endeavor in a spirit of wholeheartedness, believing that this work is very much needed in today's world and that it will serve effectively long into the future.