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*Enlightened by Nature Natura Illustrari*

**An Introduction to Geoversity with informal commentary by Nathan Gray, Co-Executive Director, Earth Train Foundation.**

August 28, 2015

**Geoversity Mission**: Collaboration for learning from Nature and in creating community, enterprise and creative expression that encourages and thrives on biological and cultural diversity.

Commentary:

“At this point in our global ecological crisis, the survival of humanity will require a fundamental shift in our attitude toward nature: from finding out how we can dominate and manipulate nature to how we can learn from her.”

Frijof Capra, Founding Director, Center for Ecoliteracy, author, *The Tao of Physics*

Once we have Geoversity fully operational, we’ll begin to articulate our vision is bolder terms. Ultimately, our mission is to bring about a popular shift in worldview, moving away from values and practices that set humankind apart from nature toward a deeply felt and fully realized oneness with nature. In a few words we are committed to bringing about a biocultural renaissance marking a life affirming change in human consciousness and behavior.

**Geoversity Structures**

**The Geoversity Group:** A corporation managing an alliance of for-profit and not-for-profit companies with missions and operations that are congruent with the Geoversity mission. At least initially, The Geoversity Group membership will be category exclusive, that is, for example, there will only be one company occupying the category of forest products development. The Geoversity Group will be a US-based Benefit Corporation, that is a corporation that includes positive impact on society and the environment in addition to profit as its legally defined goals.

**Geoversity (a.k.a. Geoversity.org)**, A US federally tax-exempt not-for-profit organization that develops and manages the conferencing; publishing; educational; and training; activities of the Geoversity Group, including activities related to science, technology and the arts, including Junglewood. The primary campus for Geovervsity.org is the Mamoní Valley Preserve and related facilities notably a center of operations at the City of Knowledge and Linton Island at Linton Bay in Panama and the Geoversity field station on the island of Sao Jorge, the Azores, Portugal.

**Geoversity Group of Funds,** starting with **The Mamoní 100** that is focused on the development of the Mamoní Valley Preserve, to be followed by funds for institutional investors (e.g. for green endowment investments) and venture capital.

Commentary:

The organizing founders of Geoversity:

* Verne Harnish, Chairman. Verne, a columnist for Fortune Magazine, best selling author (e.g.: *Scaling Up*: *How a Few Companies Make It... and Why the Rest Don't)* is an internationally renowned business coach.
* Colin Wiel, Founder and CEO of Rainforest Capital Management (the socially and environmentally positive company that established the Mamoní Valley Preserve in partnership with Earth Train and which owns most of the land held by the Preserve). After successfully taking Starwood Waypoint Residential Trust public that he co-founded, Colin founded and chairs **The Mamoní 100**, the first of the Geoversity Group of Funds, focused on the development and conservation of the Preserve as Geoversity’s world campus.
* Nathan Gray and Lider Sucre, Co-Executive Directors of Earth Train Foundation, to be re-named Geoversity Foundation, dba Geoversity.org.

We are in the process of recruiting Geoversity co-founders and advisors (see list below) who we are tapping to advise on us on the full range of structural, strategic and operational questions now before us. This process will be quite advanced by the time we hold the Geoversity launch events in Panama during the week ending February 28th, 2016. Among the ideas under consideration that are not mentioned in this summary document, are: Creating a Geoversity Secretariat in Europe and establishing a Geoversity office at a major university in the U.S.

**Geoversity** programs fall into three broad and inter-related functions:

* **Geo Praxis**: Experiential education and internships, that is hands-on and in-the-field learning experiences that are rigorous, diversified, and accountable. Geoversity programs will include, for example, a one year internship comprising work/study experiences in three or four distinct organizational settings for a multi-disciplinary approach to hands-on learning.
* **Geo Enterprise:** Natural product and practices R&D: enterprise incubation; strategic joint ventures and mergers; real estate development related to Geoversity initiatives and campus locations; joint promotions (e.g. a Junglewood Chocolate venture with Forest Finance); and point-of-sale consumer education and promotional projects.
* **Geo Missions**: Ambitious, complex long-term projects related to Geoversity’s mission and requiring bold, diverse, integrated and highly innovative action on the part of the Geoversity Group companies. Two examples already in development: *The Green Steel Biocultural Pavilion*, a performing arts center to be located at forest’s edge in the City of Knowledge that will showcase innovative design using bamboo and other natural materials. *The LA River Revitalization Corporation’s* ambitious project to restore the Lost Angeles River as the basis for multinational Geoversity internship program. Both projects involve Geoversity co-founder and Frank Gehry senior partner Anand Devarajan.

Commentary:

The establishment of Geoversity stands on a substantial body of organizational and leadership experience, including Verne Harnish’s experience in coaching CEOs and starting the Entrepreneurs’ Organization, Earth Train’s 24-year history of working with youth leaders worldwide and14 years working in team with Rainforest Capital on the creation of the 10,000-acre Mamoní Valley Preserve. Our contribution to bringing about a “biocultural renaissance” will be driven by individuals whom we call “restless creatives”, that is leaders and entrepreneurs with the potential and, ultimately, the capabilities and the networks to grow exponential organizations furthering the Geoversity mission.

Consequently, we are placing considerable emphasis on the design of internship programs that, unlike most internships:

a.) provide a diversity of hands-on learning experiences;

b.) include quality coaching and mentoring ;

c.) tough screening of applying interns and of internship placements;

d.) growing body of relevant online resources, including Geoversity webinars;

e.) training in video and photo documentation to better share internship experiences and insights with a growing network of peers and coaches.

f.) evaluations of interns, coaches and internship providers.

At least initially, Geoversity will emphasize gap year internships. Here are two resources, together with our own experiences over many years, that have influenced our decision to focus on gap year internships: <http://www.americangap.org/data-benefits.php> and, most importantly, [Making Friends in New Places, NYtimes](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/02/education/edlife/making-friends-in-new-places.html?mabReward=EG&moduleDetail=recommendations-2&action=click&contentCollection=Opinion&region=Footer&module=WhatsNext&version=WhatsNext&contentID=WhatsNext&src=recg&pgtype=article).

**Geoversity Campus and Related Facilities**

**The Mamoní Valley Preserve, Panamá.**

The Mamoní Valley Preserve, established in 2001, is Geoversity’s 4,000-hectare rural campus, located only two hours from Panama City. The Preserve is a vital buffer zone protecting a vulnerable section of one of the largest remaining stretch of contiguous rainforest – 2.5 million hectares that is one of the world’s top 20 ecological hotspots. Mamoní Valley Preserve and related facilities in Panama offer a radius of global connectivity and biological and cultural diversity unlike any other spot on Earth.

**The City of Knowledge Geoversity Headquarters.** The City of Knowledge, run by Fundación Ciudad del Saber, is a former US military base located next to the Miraflores locks located near the Pacific entrance to the inter oceanic canal, that has become one of Latin America’s leading technology and education parks, home to the regional headquarters of the UN and UN agencies; R&D institutions; Panama’s national institute for technology; a Monterey Institute of Technology center; numerous international NGOs; and several university and private school campuses. The Fundación Ciudad del Saber, is a founding Geoversity Group member.

**Geoversity’s Coastal Facilities**

**Linton Island** (a.k.a. Junglewood Island) on the coast of Colón, Panama, is a 265-acre forested island preserve owned by the conservationists Allan and Rosalind Baitel, founder-owners of the Linton Bay Marina located on the mainland across from Linton Island.

**Geoversity Atlantic Field Station,** located on the island of Sao Jorges, the Azores, Portugal. Located on seaside property donated to Geoversity, this field station will serve as a base for Geoversity internship programs focused on biocultural renewal; oceanic research and protection; and coastal conservation practices and policies.

**Founding Geoversity Group members** (proposed):

Geoversity.org (né Earth Train Foundation).

Mamoní Valley Preserve.org

Rainforest Capital Management and Mamoní 100

Junglewood Design

Forest Finance and Forest Finance North America.

Singularity University

Biomimicry 3.8 (both the Benefit Corporation and the not-for-profit Biomicry 3.8 Institute).

Open Blue/Cuna del Mar

Massive Change Network. (The company founded and directed by the designer Bruce Mau.)

ESRI Geographic information system company.

The Green School of Bali.

ibuku.com

Linton Bay Marina, Coast of Colón, Panama

Dawn Publications (leading publisher of books and audio-visual resources about nature for children and youth).

**Proposed Founders and Advisors** (in addition to organizing founders Verne Harnish, Nathan Gray, and Colin Wiel)

Janine Benyus, Ph.D., founder and CEO of Biomimicry 3.8.

Allan and Rosalind Baitel, founder-owners, Linton Bay Marina.

Pieter Adrianns, Ph.D., artist and owner of the Cultural Center of Santo Antonio, Sao Jorges, the Azores, Portugal; Distinguished Professor, Machine Learning/Artificial Intelligence University of Amsterdam, renowned pioneer in massive data mining.

Jack Dangemond, founder and CEO of ESRI.

Anand Devarajan, Senior Partner and Design Associate, Gehry Partners

Salim Ismail, Founding Executive Director & Global Ambassador, Singularity University

Maxx Bricklin, Head of Investments, PHD Investments (owned by Peter H. Diamandis) and XPRIZE Foundation.

Bruce Mau, Massive Change Network (designer, author).

Prof. Monty Hemple, Director of Environmental Studies, Redlands University; past president of the Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences (AESS)

Prof. David Ricketts, Innovation Scholar, Faculty Associate ,Technology and Entrepreneurship Center,  
School of Engineering and Applied Sciences ,Harvard University

Jeff Guckert, Ph.D., Assistant Head of School and Dean of Faculty Crossroads School, Santa Monica.

Peter Senge, Ph.D., senior lecturer at the MIT Sloan School of Management, co-faculty at the New England Complex Systems Institute, and the founder of the Society for Organizational Learning.

Michael Crow, Ph.D., President, Arizona State University.

Christy Walton, founder and board member, Cuna del Mar.

David Plumer, CEO, Open Blue.

John Hardy, Designer and Founder, The Green School, Bali, Indonesia.

Elora Hardy, Co-Founder and Creative Director, ibuku.com, Bali, Indonesia.

Harry Assenmacher, CEO, ForestFinance, Bonn, Germany.