

Neruda Intentional Community

Vision: Neruda is a secular, egalitarian community that welcomes children, human diversity, ecological sensibility, mutual learning, and joy.

Mission: We come together so that we may better live in accordance with our beliefs, and for the joy of community. We believe that all people have high and equal value, and that respect for all living things has priority over material wealth.

We are committed to living our values personally, in the community, and in the outside world. We respect and welcome people of all races, ethnicities, creeds, ages, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, and experiences.

We undertake to create a community in which adults and children can share their lives through work, learning, and play, and grow with nurturing and support: a diverse rural community that values ecological sustainability, respect and support for children, integrity, nonviolence, mindfulness, beauty, harmony, healthfulness, simplicity, creativity, joy, honesty, trust, and fun. We work to grow strong, long-term connections among members and with the outside community, continually seeking to work together, learn together and teach together as much as possible.

Membership: All those who live at Neruda are members, regardless of age.

Decision making: Decisions are made by 100% consensus of adults. All adults are equal in the decision-making process. We will not dedicate the community to one religion, spirituality, sexuality, race, ethnicity, or gender in our planning or governance. The word *adult* will be defined by consensus in the future.

Ownership: Initially, Sue and John Morris retain ownership of the land. Once the mortgage is paid off, the land will be placed in a nonprofit organization or land trust of some sort, and all adult members of Neruda will constitute and serve on the Board of Directors of that entity.

Use of the land: Legitimate uses of Neruda land are houses, farming, animal husbandry, orchards, barns, community building, trails, forms of sustainable energy, wildlife sanctuary, hiking trails, pond and camp use, stream use. Motor vehicle use in the portions of the land more than 600 feet from Groton Forest Road will be determined by consensus. Utilitarian vehicles will be permitted (such as construction and maintenance equipment); motorized recreational vehicles will be prohibited (such as snowmobiles and dirt bikes). In the future, vehicles to facilitate handicapped access may be permitted on specific trails.

Environmentalism: We are committed to our community becoming progressively more ecologically sustainable over time, and to promoting ecologically sound practices. Toward that end, we work to create and maintain sustainable energy use.

Finances: Each household will contribute to the community a sum determined by full consensus of the members. Until the mortgage is paid off, that amount is equal to the taxes on a member's particular dwelling plus 1/5 of the taxes on the communal land, or a sliding scale of 10% to 25% of their household salary, whichever is more. Once the mortgage is paid in full, the members will

decide on the appropriate amount to contribute to the community to cover taxes and community-wide projects.

Community work: The community may decide to initiate a shared work requirement, such that each adult member will contribute a certain number of hours to a community project.

Housing: Housing will be built and maintained by the members. Housing structures will be paid for and maintained by the household that maintains residence in the house. We agree that the Community will participate in the design and location of buildings, the use of sustainable materials and building practices, landscaping, and other planning associated with building a home. All community housing structures will eventually house 2 households (duplex housing).

Communal activities: The community can decide to participate together in communal ventures such as community-wide meals, community projects, farming, harvesting and preserving food, and activities in the larger communities of Marshfield, Cabot, and beyond.

Public: We welcome visitors who are respectful and courteous to residents onto our land. Visitors are welcome to hike, bike, and participate in some of our activities. We limit use of public motor vehicles to the residential portion of our land, except when we specifically indicate an exception. Hunting and fishing are reserved for our members and our members' guests, and are subject to community agreement. The community will, from time to time, host educational events, for our members and for the wider community. Particular people may be excluded from all or part of our land, by consensus.

Lifestyle choices:

1. We are part of a community of people who support and care for one another.
2. We work to achieve equality among individuals, and to create opportunities for each member to live a fulfilling life.
3. We work to create a safe and loving environment in which to raise children. We work to ensure that children will be supported in every way.
4. We work with each other to benefit from pooled effort and resources.
5. As much as reasonably possible, we minimize materialism and the habit of ever-increasing consumption that is common in the West today, while respecting each person's needs.
6. Nonviolence: We agree that violence and abuse, whether physical or emotional, has no place in our community.
7. Weapons: In recognition that guns in our community might pose unnecessary danger and would contribute to feelings of unease for some members, we agree that there will be no firearms or explosive weapons anywhere in our community, except as may be agreed upon by all members for a particular purpose (such as to slaughter animals).

8. We value aesthetics as a guiding principal in making community decisions. Artistic beauty and sensibility directly affect the quality of our lives and lifestyles. Therefore, we will work to bring beauty to our community.

9. We believe it is essential and desirable to have friendly, mutually beneficial relationships with surrounding towns and communities.

Animals: We hold respect for the living earth and all it encompasses. We recognize our human responsibility to care for the viability and natural order of living things. We recognize that all life must struggle to nourish itself; yet within that context, we work to be nonviolent and to ensure humane practices.

We will treat living things, such as animals and plants, with respect by attempting not to impinge on their natural environment as much as possible, in the context of our daily lives and the creation of our community homes. We will not tolerate abuse or neglect of animals in our community, whether they are cared for by individuals, by the community, or are wild creatures.

The community will consider the lives of other beings in balance with our need to learn. For learning purposes we will choose as often as possible to observe our fellow creatures in their natural environments, rather than removing them to our own. We will try to learn, and teach our children to learn, by observing without interfering. We will creatively seek to find low-impact ways of learning about other creatures.

Community Animals: At times the community may wish to take an animal into our stewardship for some purpose, for example learning or agriculture. We will treat the choice to keep any community animal as a serious decision, requiring thought and planning. Once we have chosen to steward animals, we will consider the needs and happiness of the creature in our care as much as our own. We will work to use humane methods to slaughter those animals we choose to use for our sustenance.

We will strive to provide an environment and life for the creatures we care for that is close to those natural to them. We will work to ensure that animals will be free to engage in the behaviors natural to them, and interact with the environment they are born to expect. Whenever feasible we will allow creatures free will by not confining them or otherwise using force to control their actions. We will find ways to allow free choice even if they prove inconvenient to us. We may find it to be life sustaining to confine a creature, we will endeavor to understand and to match the natural range of the creature. We will provide a space sufficient to assure ourselves that the creature will not feel excessively restricted, as well as we can ascertain.

Private Animals: When members of a household accept responsibility for an animal, they will be considered to be a private animal. We will encourage each other to treat the animals we care for privately in ways that respect their natural needs for food, shelter, space and freedom, within the confines of living together with them. We will take responsibility for their actions, as they beset our human ways of living. For example, we will take responsibility for ensuring that the pets are not a danger or nuisance to other members of the community.