

2026 Green Party Annual National Meeting

People. Planet. Peace.

July 23–July 26

Chicago, IL

Embedding the Voice of Nature in Governance Structures and Beyond



Presented by **Lizzie Wood**
with **Lawyers for Nature**



Lawyers for Nature

Rights of Nature

This stems from Indigenous knowledge.

*It is the recognition and honoring
that Nature has rights:
rights to exist, persist,
maintain and regenerate its vital systems—
and we have responsibility to ensure those
rights!*



*(Image: bird flying under oak tree branches,
artwork in green)*

Green Party U.S. Platform



Rights of Nature

We support the adoption of local, state, and federal laws which recognize the legal rights of natural communities and ecosystems – including wetlands, streams, rivers, aquifers, and other water systems – to exist, flourish, regenerate, naturally evolve, and be restored. We support the inclusion in those laws of the ability of people and communities to file legal actions in the name of the affected natural community or ecosystem, and for courts to require restoration of the natural community or ecosystem back to its pre-damaged state.

Nature - The Myth of Separation

We Are Nature Campaign Words can Change the World

nature

/ˈneɪtʃə/

1. The phenomena of the physical world collectively; esp. plants, animals, and other features and products of the earth itself, as **opposed to humans or human creations**.

Oxford English Dictionary

nature

/ˈneɪtʃə/

1. Nature is all the animals, plants, and other things in the world that are not made by people, and all the events and processes that are not caused by people.

Collins Dictionary

[SIGN THE PETITION](#)

Images: cream colored dandelion and butterfly on olive green background

Why do we Need the Voice of Nature?



“Having Nature represented in decision-making structures is a response to multiple, interconnected crises facing society, including biodiversity loss, climate change and systemic governance failures. Traditional decision making structures are no longer sufficient and new approaches are needed to govern our relationship with the natural world.”

- Lawyers for Nature

(Image: cream colored bird with twig illustration)

A political first...



The Green Party of Florida is the first political party in the U.S. to embed the voice of Nature in its structure by adopting a Nature Director.

We want to show you how!



(Images: GPFL Nature Director, QR code link to Voice Of Nature page, <https://www.gpfl.org/info/voice-of-nature>)

Embedding the Voice of Nature

*~ in your Candidate Platform
and Public Service*

*~ in your Green Party: local, state,
and national*

~ in Nonprofits and Businesses



(Image: Chamomile flower and oak branch illustrations)

Greens know: People in harmony with Planet is Peace!



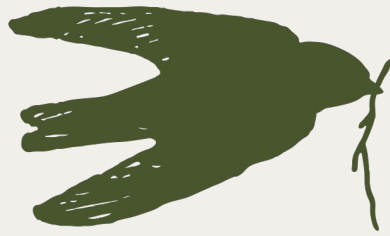
*“It is about remembering
that we’re participants in a larger community of life.”*

(Image: Fly garrick mushroom illustration in orange and cream.)

- Cormac Cullinan



Nature Pause



Lawyers for Nature

Introductions

We represent Nature's interests. We work with organisations across many sectors to create deep systems change by embedding the voice of Nature into their governance and organisational structures.

We imagine a world in which Nature has legal rights. We act as though it does. We educate others about this movement and create legal rules that allow people to embody a world where Nature has rights.



Reimagining the Law for Nature

Green Party Annual National Meeting 2026

(Image: wildflowers and butterfly illustration)



Structure of the Session

1. Nature on the Board
2. Case studies
3. Being a Nature Guardian
4. Q&A





(Image: Rebecca Solnit)

A crisis is a crisis of storytelling

- Rebecca Solnit (2025)



(Image: Poppy illustration)

So what is **our** story?



Story > Morality > Ethics > Politics > Law



Environmental law protects nature?



Environmental law **permits** nature to
be **used** as an **object...**

to be
mined,
burnt,
cut down,
drained,
dammed; and
polluted.



What if...



Nature were a legal person
With rights



Nature were a legal person
With rights
With power



Nature were a legal person
With rights
With power
With influence



Nature were a legal person
With rights
With power
With influence
With agency



1936



(2 images: Coke bottles; Women seated wearing a golden gown.)

Lettie Pate Whitehead was the first woman appointed to a board of directors of a trading company

HOW MIGHT BUSINESS **CHANGE**
IF **NATURE** HAD
A VOICE AND **A VOTE?**



Faith in Nature: *“Can we make Nature our boss?”*



Image:table and five multi-colored chairs.

House of Hackney: *“Can we include future generations?”*



(Image: artwork of Mother Nature over the well of life.)

FAITH IN NATURE[®]

Future
Everything

ZAP
HOUSE OF HACKNEY
LONDON



common
nature recovery



SAMS
Scottish Association
for Marine Science

FAITH IN NATURE[®]

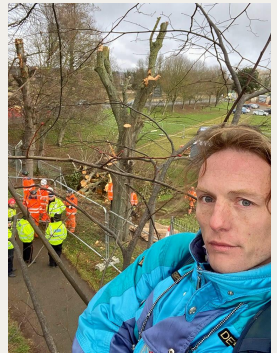
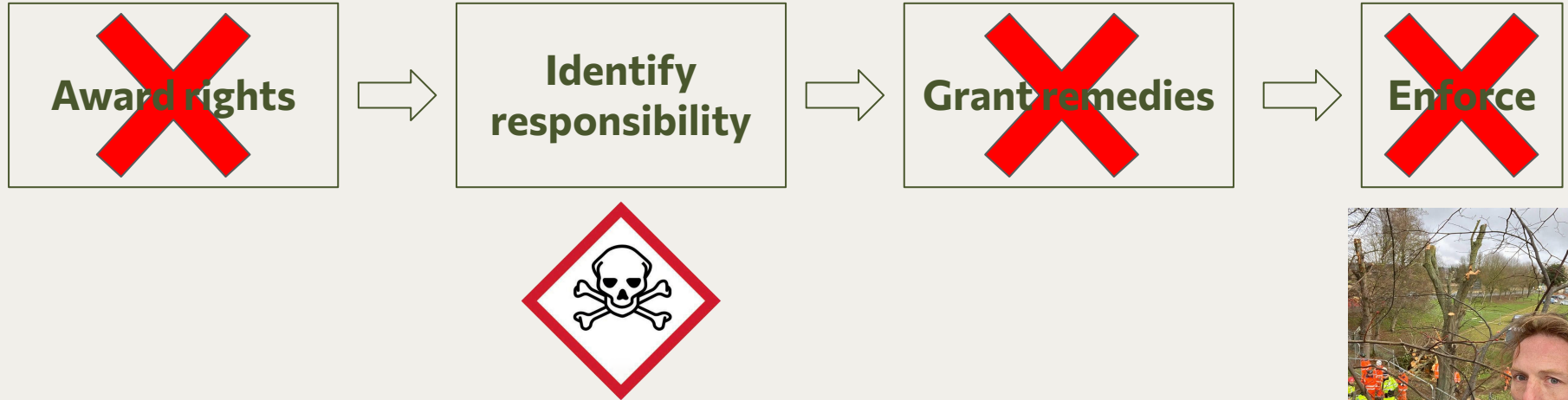


House of Hackney
HOUSE OF HACKNEY
LONDON

Future
Everything

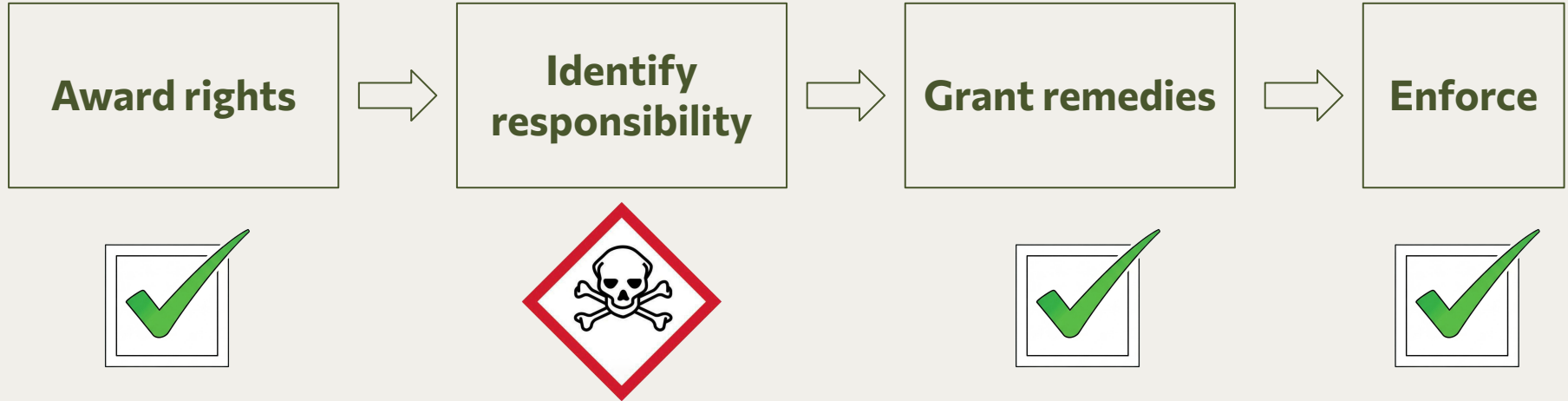


Rights to responsibilities to remedies



(Photo: Paul Powlesland in tree)

Rights to responsibilities to remedies for Nature



What if the Green Party imagined a
space for Nature and rights for Nature
in decision making spaces?

What would Nature say?



Being a Nature Guardian

with Paul Powlesland



(Photo: Paul Powlesland)



Environmentalist becomes first juror to swear oath on river water

Paul Powlesland, the co-founder of Lawyers for Nature, says he considers the River Roding to be sacred



Paul Powlesland swore his devotion to nature before a London crown court. Photograph: David Levens / The Guardian

When jurors are called to court, they are required to swear on a holy book or make a secular promise to tell the truth.

So court officials were perplexed when the environmental activist and barrister Paul Powlesland was called for jury service and produced a vial of river water and asked to swear on the River Roding.

Who is Paul Powlesland? UK lawyer who removed 200 bags of river waste now faces up to 2 years in prison over permit dispute

Nillohit Bagchi | Jun 20, 2026, 23:48 IST

Share

Paul Powlesland is a British barrister and environmental campaigner who helped remove more than 200 bags of waste from a polluted London river. While supporters credit the clean up with bringing wildlife back, authorities say the work was carried out without permits, leaving him facing a possible prison sentence.



Environmental lawyer facing up to 2 years in prison for clearing rubbish from East London river

Paul Powlesland, 40, and a group of volunteers filled over 200 bags of rubbish from the River Roding in Barking, East London



NEWS By **Véronique Hawksworth** AI Content Editor and **SWNS** Jack Fifield (Jack Fifield)

10:43, 18 Jun 2026 | Updated 10:52, 18 Jun 2026



Further questions...



With thanks to...

Nature

The team at Lawyers for Nature

The Green Party U.S. ANM team

Green Party of Florida Delegates and Support Team

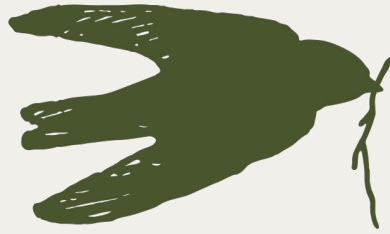
See also...

Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN)
and Antarctic Rights

Remember...

Future Generations of all Species of Mother Earth– *it's for all of us!*





Lawyers for Nature

Our Team

Lawyers for Nature are a collective of lawyers, researchers, strategists, academics, activists, students and campaigners that have come together to work on behalf of Nature. We are incorporated as a not for profit, Community Interest Company. We are united by being:

- **Authentic:** We are genuine, true to our word, to our personality, to our values and to our spirits.
- **Courageous:** We are willing to do the hard work needed to change our systems; we have strength in the face of adversity.
- **Visionary:** We know what the future can and should look like and we work to bring that into being with our imagination and skills.

Our values are also grounded in the following:

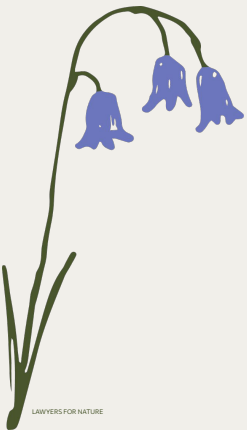
- **Integrity:** We act in alignment with our core mission, ensuring that we focus on representing Nature, without compromise to expediency or outside pressures.
- **Collaboration:** We believe in working alongside communities, experts, and other organisations globally, knowing that real change requires collective effort.
- **Innovation:** We constantly seek creative solutions to establish Nature's rights in a system designed to serve humans. Our work disrupts traditional models, creating space for new legal norms that prioritise ecological wellbeing.



Some further examples of our work

Rights of Nature

Lawyers for Nature are driving the movement for Nature to have Rights. They are actively working to create a Rights of Nature Bill in the UK to recognise that Nature is alive and has its own interests and that those interests should be recognised within our legal, political and economic systems.



Sheffield Tree Campaign

This was one of the most successful UK grassroots environmental campaigns of the last decade. Ordinary people stood up to protect their local trees and, through dedicated and determined action, saved thousands of trees from unnecessary destruction. What was crucial for campaigners to understand was that the trees needing protection had no rights, the instrument to give the trees protection (TPO) was not administered and the council believed that they 'owned' the trees.

Lawyers for Nature provided legal advice to campaigners, leveraged legal frameworks and developed strategies to create conditions for peaceful protests to be effective and lead to trees saved as a result.

We Are Nature Campaign

The dictionary definition of Nature lags behind the scientific and cultural consensus – that humans are part of Nature, not separate from it. In collaboration with House of Hackney, Lawyers for Nature are campaigning to persuade the main UK English dictionaries to change the definition of the word Nature to one that includes humans, as all dictionaries currently exclude humans from their definitions.

The aim of the project is to highlight our connection and interdependence with Nature. Updating the definition of Nature is a powerful tool to amplify the message that we are entirely dependent on the wider web of life, of which we are only a very small part.