

# Permaculture in Practice

## Think globally, read locally

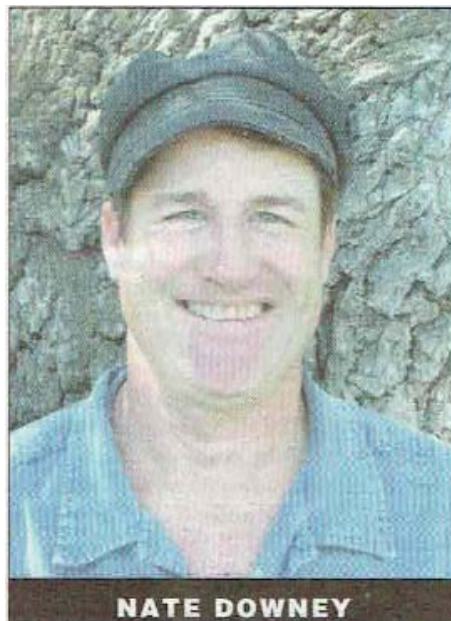
It's true! Ask any bookseller or visit [www.harvesttherain.com](http://www.harvesttherain.com). My book, *Harvest the Rain*, is available! One permacultural principle encourages the use of local resources. From this perspective, I have no choice but to suggest that readers of this local column read my locally written, locally focused, and locally published book.

But many people also prefer to hear an author speak before considering a book purchase. If you're one of those, here's a condensed version of my September schedule:

- "Fall is for Planning: Garden Design for Children," Little Earth School (Sept. 16)
- *The Journey Home: an interview with Diego Mulligan* on KSFR, 101.1 FM (Sept. 21)
- "Books at the Market" booksigning at the Santa Fe Farmers Market, sponsored by Collected Works (Sept. 25)
- Booksigning, St. John's College (Sept. 25)
- "How Watershed Sensitivity Will Guide Us from the Brink of Disaster," New Mexico Watershed Forum, Albuquerque (Sept. 28)

Even though October will take me far from home, the events that draw me away have strong local ties. The American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association's annual conference in Austin, Texas, Oct. 4–6 will feature four or five presenters from Santa Fe, including me. For more information, check out [www.arcsa.org](http://www.arcsa.org).

The 2010 conference of Bioneers (which started here 21 years ago) takes place in San Rafael, California, Oct. 15–18. I'll be taking a break from the podium. Instead, I'll have my listening ears on as Jane Goodall, James Hansen, Andy Lipkis, and other influential speakers take the stage. People might try to organize a better conference about saving the world, but locals Kenny Ausubel and Nina Simons have it down to a scientific art. If there ever were a reason to burn carbon, travelling to a Bioneers' conference is it. Please visit [www.bioneers.org](http://www.bioneers.org) to learn more and sign up.



Everybody knows Goodall, the modern goddess of wildlife. Most folks have heard of Hansen, the NASA scientist who has sounded alarms about climate change since the last century. But many readers will be unable to name the person who prevented Los Angeles' concrete drainage ditches from being unnecessarily elevated seven feet on either bank. Lipkis stopped the zillion-dollar construction project by inviting the press, the public, and the Powers That Be to a small house in LA. At a prescribed time, he fire-hosed tremendous quantities of water onto the property.

The result was that none of the pseudo stormwater migrated off the site. Thanks to a cistern, a few passive, water-harvesting techniques, some healthy plant material, and an impressive combination of creativity and follow-through, the bureaucrat in charge of the concrete-ditch project cancelled it the day after Lipkis' localized demonstration. At that watershed moment, the City of Angels began to harvest rain with gusto. Like Santa Fe, Austin, and Tucson, it's now at the forefront of storm-oriented solutions to the water challenges that face most of the world's cities today.

*Nate Downey is president of Santa Fe Permaculture (505-424-4444) and the author of *Harvest the Rain: How to Enrich Your Life by Seeing Every Storm as a Resource* (Sunstone Press).*