Green Paper 10 — Notes Toward Planetary Guardianship

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Author's note — AI co-creation. These papers are working notes authored by Lars A. Engberg. They were drafted and edited in conversation with an AI language model (*GPT-5 Thinking mini*). The AI assisted with phrasing, organization, and initial drafting; the author curated, edited, and is fully responsible for substantive claims, omissions, and interpretations. Where passages were substantially shaped by the AI, this is indicated in the editorial log. The work is offered as field notes and an experiment in collaborative composition rather than a finished, peer-reviewed product.

Abstract

These notes gather the series into a short frame: planetary guardianship is an ethic of capacity. It blends boundaries, care, repair, attention, civic regulation, and perceptual infrastructures toward practices that sustain life across ecological time.

The paper is not a manifesto but an opening: a set of protocols and lines of practical inquiry — how to govern limits, cultivate repair, design attention, and embed beauty as a stabilizer of stewardship.

It concludes with a sketch of next steps: protocol development, localized practice, distributed stewardship, and practice-based research into viability and care.

1. Ethics as capacity

Ethics here is not only principle but practice: the ability of people and institutions to act responsibly under constraint. Capacity includes knowledge, resources, rhythms, and habits that make responsible action possible.

2. Regulation and viability

Regulation should be read as enabling viability: rules that protect thresholds, support repair, and distribute burdens. Viability is the primary aim; regulation is the tool to sustain viable configurations of life.

3. Attention, commons, and local stewardship

Attention is a scarce public good. The commons and local stewardship practices allocate attention in visible, consequential ways. Supporting local institutions is a way of distributing sensing and response capacities that national systems cannot hold alone.

4. Repair and perceptual infrastructures

Repair practices and perceptual infrastructures (beauty, rituals) sustain the emotional and motivational soil for stewardship. They are not soft extras but necessary supports for durable governance.

5. Protocols and practice

1. Develop protocol templates for boundary-respecting decision cycles (assessment → delay → review → response).
2. Fund standing repair capacities: civic mediation, ritual facilitation, and material repair teams.
3. Design civic nervous systems that separate rhythmically distinct channels for fast and slow signals.
4. Embed beauty and perceptual care in public maintenance budgets and civic design standards.
5. Center differential responsibilities and reparative mechanisms to address uneven burdens.

6. A calm opening

Planetary guardianship is neither centralised command nor purely volunteerism; it is a practiced architecture of shared responsibility. The work ahead is empirical and craft-based: building protocols, testing practices, and learning through localized experimentation that scales by translation rather than replication.

Methods / Editorial note

These Green Papers are written as field notes and working reflections. The drafting process combined (1) authorial writing and revision, (2) iterative prompts to an AI language model for drafting and editing, and (3) conventional editorial revision. Key practices:

- **AI assistance:** The AI produced early drafts and suggested language; the author reviewed and revised every paragraph.
- **Sourcing:** The papers use a "working bibliography" as orientation rather than a formal literature review. Citations are selective; empirical claims should be verified before formal use.
- **Verification:** The author is responsible for verification of cited sources and accepts responsibility for errors. Prior to academic submission, each reference and empirical claim should be independently checked and expanded.
- **Versioning:** Each paper carries a version line (v0.1). Substantial revisions will be tracked in a change log at Planetary Guardians / Spiralweb.

Closing questions

- Which protocol elements are portable between contexts, and which must be locally remade?
- How to fund standing repair and attention infrastructures in ways that endure?
- What institutional forms best hold long horizons inside short electoral cycles?
- How to weave beauty, ritual, and repair into ordinary civic budgets and practices?
- Where to begin practice-based research into guardianship that combines craft and policy?

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