

THE BUCKMINSTER FULLER CHALLENGE

Statement from the Buckminster Fuller Challenge Jury:

Dr. John Todd's *Comprehensive Design for a Carbon Neutral World*, in the opinion of this jury, best embodies the bold, visionary approach to large-scale societal transformation pioneered by Buckminster Fuller. Dr. Todd's proposal sets forth a profound vision to heal the environmental and economic scars of the Appalachian region and a detailed strategy to build a dynamic sustainable economic basis for lasting renewal. A comprehensive design strategy, the Carbon Neutral World will use biological processes to restore degraded coal lands in Appalachia, and to use the process to return atmospheric carbon to the soil.

Dr. Todd's vision sets forth a new theory of ecological design weaving together a set of processes – from restoration of land to geo-sequestration of carbon, to community involvement, to long-term economic vitality – to create a blueprint for a future in Appalachia that envisions a harmonious self-sustaining community. This is one of the only true whole systems projects that is place-based but widely applicable.

Todd's design starts with a carbon-neutral goal – reflecting Fuller's idea of the preferred state. Although trialed in Appalachia, the program is not just a U.S. solution. There are devastated coal lands throughout the world and no one has yet determined what to do with them. Todd's vision could provide some answers and a roadmap to get there. It will have huge uptake globally.

This project is building on Dr. Todd's extensive biological knowledge to take it to a whole new level. Dr. Todd's previous work had focused on water. This project takes the successes he's had in the past and applies them to two problems. The first is what to do with the devastated environment of Appalachia, and the second is how to remove carbon from the air and stick it into the ground. The latter is of extreme global importance, while the former has applications not just in Appalachia, but also in coal-fields from Afghanistan to areas of Poland and Eastern Europe where coal has been extracted in devastating ways.

Todd's idea focuses on increasing the natural capacity of soils to sequester carbon, and to increase the soils' own fertility over time. It puts all that is done on the land in the context of the health and maintenance of our climate. This healing starts with the soil – building soil, then community. It is a process that, over time, uses ecological succession for landscape healing and community healing.

John Todd's concept of ecological design finds deep parallels in Fuller's approach to design as a comprehensive and integrative process. Todd's project is not a single technology solution, but a complex process related to the legacy of life on earth. Todd draws from ecology as a conceptual template and uses ecological thought to deliver stable design ideas.

Just as people are beginning to accept that there will be no "silver bullet" solution to our most pressing problems, but a portfolio of solutions – silver "buck shot" – this proposal lays out what that portfolio can look like and how it can deliver a critical path for implementation.

The Buckminster Fuller Challenge Jury

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