Institute for Planetary Intelligence

Concept Note

Incubated by Possible Planet / Center for Regenerative Community Solutions

March 2026

Overview

The **Institute for Planetary Intelligence** is proposed as a new initiative incubated under **Possible Planet** and the **Center for Regenerative Community Solutions (CRCS)**, emerging directly from the intellectual, ethical, and practical work now underway through **Possible Planet Lab**. Possible Planet already describes its mission in terms of restoring the Earth, regenerating communities, and advancing practical solutions for people and planet, while Possible Planet Lab explicitly frames its work as "advanced intelligence for a regenerative future," with active lines of inquiry in planetary intelligence, bioregional intelligence, AI integrity, ethical AI, and practical research programs for developing planetary intelligence

The Institute would be designed to help address one of the defining challenges of our time: humanity has acquired extraordinary technological power without yet developing the corresponding capacity for wise, whole-system perception, deliberation, and coordinated action. The original scientific idea of **planetary intelligence**, advanced by Adam Frank, David Grinspoon, and Sara Walker, describes a stage at which collective knowledge becomes integrated into the functioning of coupled planetary systems. Their deeper question was whether a technological species can mature quickly enough to preserve habitability rather than destroy it. This concept provides a compelling scientific origin for the Institute.

That question now meets a dangerous historical reality. The *Possible Planet: Pathways to a Habitable Future* manuscript frames our predicament as one of overshoot, ecological destabilization, and civilizational crisis, while also insisting that local regeneration, bioregional learning, and a shift toward ecological intelligence remain possible. The book's public materials explicitly connect collapse risk, regeneration, bioregionalism, ecological learning centers, and "what AI wants us to know about living intelligently on the Earth."

The Institute for Planetary Intelligence would respond by creating a practical platform for **research, field-building, applied tools, and real-world intelligence services** in service to life.

Why now

Humanity is now operating in a period of systemic overshoot, ecological stress, political fragmentation, and institutional distrust. At the same time, AI is rapidly becoming part of civilization's basic operating infrastructure. That combination creates both danger and opportunity. The danger is that increasingly powerful AI systems may be folded into extractive, authoritarian, or ecologically blind institutions. The opportunity is that AI, if governed wisely

and aligned with life-serving purposes, can help people and institutions make better sense of complex systems, evaluate tradeoffs, identify blind spots, and coordinate restorative action.

Possible Planet and CRCS are unusually well-positioned to incubate such an institute because their existing work already bridges:

- regenerative community solutions
- climate and clean-energy finance
- ecological restoration
- bioregional and community development
- systems thinking
- practical experimentation
- public-purpose AI inquiry.

Initially, the proposed Institute would not be a wholly separate institution. It would be a **next-stage institutional expression** of work that is already visibly underway.

Mission

The mission of the Institute for Planetary Intelligence is to **develop and apply planetary intelligence in service to life** by advancing the science, ethics, institutions, tools, and practices needed for humanity to become a regenerative participant in Earth's living systems.

In practical terms, this means helping people, organizations, communities, bioregions, and public institutions:

- perceive reality more accurately
- make sense of complexity more coherently
- deliberate more wisely
- coordinate action more effectively
- align human systems with ecological limits and possibilities.

Institutional logic

The Institute should function in three mutually reinforcing modes.

First, as a field-building institute. It would help establish planetary intelligence as a serious field of study, inquiry, and action. This includes conceptual development, essays, reports, convenings, fellowships, curricula, and a regular **State of Planetary Intelligence** publication. Possible Planet Lab already contains the seeds of this field-building role through pages and essays such as "Developing Planetary Intelligence," "Developing a Planetary Intelligence Framework," and "A Practical Research Program for Developing Planetary Intelligence."

Second, as an applied lab. It would build practical tools and prototypes: bioregional dashboards, scenario rooms, integrity infrastructures, restoration copilots, collective-sensemaking systems, and policy-support tools. This is consistent with the Lab's current emphasis on AI integrity, ethical AI, and practical methods.

Third, as a service platform. It would provide intelligence services to mission-aligned actors such as environmental organizations, local and regional governments, foundations, multilateral institutions, and selected financial and policy bodies seeking better decision support for resilience, regeneration, and systems transition.

Program areas

The Institute would begin with five interlinked program areas.

1. Planetary Intelligence Theory, Ethics, and Civilizational Learning

This program would clarify the field itself: what planetary intelligence means, how it relates to individual and collective intelligence, how wisdom differs from optimization, and what forms of governance and ethical discipline are needed in an age of ecological overshoot and machine intelligence. It would anchor the Institute in rigorous inquiry rather than slogans.

2. Bioregional Intelligence and Living Place Systems

This program would focus on the scale at which people can actually learn, deliberate, and govern together: the bioregion. The *Possible Planet* materials explicitly elevate bioregionalism, ecological learning centers, and local regeneration as vital pathways to a habitable future. This program would translate that into dashboards, indicators, stewardship tools, and place-based scenario processes.

3. AI for Regeneration and EcoRestoration

This program would use AI to support ecological restoration, adaptation, and stewardship. It would build on the existing Possible Planet Lab orientation toward regenerative AI and could partner with adjacent initiatives already experimenting with restoration-oriented intelligence tools. Its purpose would not be to automate ecological wisdom, but to make knowledge more accessible, integrated, and actionable.

4. Collective Intelligence, Governance, and Democratic Resilience

This program would address a core feature of the present predicament: societies are flooded with information but weakened in their capacity to reason together. The Institute would develop methods for structured dialogue, tradeoff mapping, contradiction detection, stakeholder synthesis, and responsible AI-assisted deliberation, especially in complex and polarized settings.

5. Regenerative Economics and Transition Intelligence

Incubated under CRCS, the Institute can draw directly on existing experience in regenerative financing, community resilience, and systemic transition. This program would support better alignment of capital, policy, and ecological reality through intelligence services, scenario analysis, and regenerative economic design. Possible Planet already presents itself as advancing regenerative economic solutions and innovative financing in service to climate and community resilience.

Initial demonstrations

To establish credibility, the Institute should begin with a small number of visible, high-value demonstrations.

One should be a **Genesee Finger Lakes Bioregional Intelligence Node**, or an equivalent place-based pilot, showing how a bioregion can monitor its ecological and social condition, deliberate about priorities, and coordinate action around restoration and resilience.

A second should be an **AI for EcoRestoration prototype**, demonstrating how mission-governed AI can help restoration practitioners, students, communities, and funders make better decisions.

A third should be a **Planetary Intelligence Commons prototype**, establishing practical norms for provenance, transparency, methods, assumptions, and epistemic integrity in public-interest intelligence work.

These early demonstrations would give the Institute a grounded identity: not only a philosophy, but a working practice.

How the Institute would use AI

The Institute would take a clear position: **AI should be used as support for life-serving intelligence, not as a substitute for human moral responsibility.**

Its best uses include evidence synthesis, scenario analysis, ecological monitoring, claims comparison, integrity checking, educational support, and structured deliberation. Its worst uses include black-box authority, anthropomorphic manipulation, surveillance-heavy governance, and optimization detached from ecological and ethical limits. This distinction is already implicit in Possible Planet Lab's current emphasis on ethical AI, AI integrity, and research programs aimed at planetary intelligence rather than mere capability escalation.

Governance and incubation model

The Institute should be incubated under the **Possible Planet / CRCS umbrella** for at least its initial phase. That offers legal, fiscal, and narrative continuity, while allowing the Institute to develop its own public identity over time. Possible Planet already functions as a platform for regenerative initiatives and sponsored projects, including the Design School for Regenerating Earth, with related giving pathways, which suggests a practical basis for incubation.

Governance should include:

- a small **Stewardship Council** for fiduciary and strategic oversight
- a **Scientific and Methods Council** for rigor and evaluation
- a **Council of Place, Practice, and Wisdom** to keep the work grounded in real communities, ecological practice, and lived complexity.

Initially, these three functions would be undertaken by a **Founding Governance Council** responsible for developing the program, recruiting new members, and seeking funding.

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Funding opportunity

The Institute is now at a point where seed support could have outsized leverage. Early philanthropic support would enable Possible Planet / CRCS to:

- formalize the Institute concept
- recruit founding advisors
- launch initial pilots
- publish the first major framing paper or report
- build the first tools and methods
- begin partnerships with public and mission-aligned institutions.

Because the Institute is being incubated rather than built from scratch, donor support would not be funding an abstract idea alone. It would be accelerating a visible, coherent evolution of work already underway through Possible Planet and Possible Planet Lab.

Year-one priorities

In its first year, the Institute would aim to:

1. establish its charter, advisory structure, and operating principles;
2. publish a founding paper on planetary intelligence in service to life;
3. launch one bioregional and one AI-for-regeneration pilot;
4. develop a basic Planetary Intelligence Commons framework;
5. convene a small circle of scientific, practical, and philanthropic allies;
6. secure at least one institutional partnership or advisory engagement.

Invitation

The Institute for Planetary Intelligence is an effort to help humanity become more capable of inhabiting Earth wisely. It begins from a sober view of our present condition, but not from despair. It assumes that intelligence worthy of the name must be joined to care, truthfulness, restraint, reciprocity, and a willingness to learn from life itself.

Incubated within Possible Planet and CRCS, and growing organically out of Possible Planet Lab, this initiative seeks support from partners who recognize that the great challenge before us is not only to invent more powerful tools, but to cultivate the forms of intelligence, governance, and regenerative practice that can help keep a living planet livable.

For more information, please contact:

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