



***EcoSikh** is the Sikh community's contribution to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) Plans for Generational Change Project, which aims to help the world's major religious traditions create long-term plans to improve their relationship with the environment.*

### **MISSION**

**EcoSikh** connects Sikhs values, beliefs, and institutions to the most important environmental issues facing our world. We draw on the rich tradition of the Sikh Gurus and the Khalsa Panth to shape the behavior and outlook of Sikhs and the world, ensuring that our deep, abiding reverence for all creation remains a central part of the Sikh way of life.

### **VISION**

**Guru Nanak Dev Ji**, the first embodiment of Divine Light in the Sikh tradition, laid the foundation for a sacred vision for the environment when he composed the shabad:

*Pavan Guru Pani Pita, Mata Dharat Mahat.*

*Air is the Guru, Water the Father, and the Earth is the Great Mother. 'We honor our Gurus' wisdom by believing that all humans have an intrinsic sensitivity to the natural world, and that a sustainable, more just society is possible, where water, air, land, forests, and biodiversity remain vibrant, living systems for our generation and future generations.*

## HISTORY

The EcoSikh movement was launched in July 2009 as the Sikh community's contribution to the **Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC)** and the **United Nations Development Program (UNDP)**,

### **Plans for Generational Change**

' project. The new project works with all the major world religions to offer a faith-based response to the challenges of global climate change. Sikh organizations and leaders from Punjab and the Diaspora announced the five-year plan at a two-day conference in New Delhi as a Sikh commitment to curbing the climate crisis and protecting the environment in the places we live, work, and gather together for prayer and celebration.

In November 2009, Sikh environmental leaders **Baba Sewa Singh** of Khadur Sahib, Amritsar and **Baba Balbir Singh** of **Seechewal**

Sultanpur, Kapurthala Punjab, joined two hundred leaders from nine of the world's major faiths: Baha'ism, Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Shintoism and Sikhism to gather in Windsor Castle in the United Kingdom to commit to longterm practical action for the environment. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed the Celebration, which was hosted by Prince Philip, founder of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation.

The Celebration at Windsor Castle came a month before the major Copenhagen Climate Change talks in December 2009 and was considered the first major, internationally coordinated commitment by the religions to the environment. The event was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and major secular bodies, including Conservation International, the Forest Stewardship Council, Fairtrade, and the World Wide Fund.

In August 2010, EcoSikh hired its first staff members in Punjab, India and New York, U.S.A. to work with Sikh leaders around the world to carry the first transnational Sikh environmental movement forward. What we submit here is a humble beginning, though we hope that a vision of global environmental action, grassroots empowerment, and solidarity across the Sikh community will continue to attract notable interest around the globe.

## STAFF

### South Asia Program Manager

Ravneet Pal Singh

Ravneet Pal Singh graduated with a degree in Agricultural Engineering from Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. He worked as a project manager for an irrigation firm for a number of years. His main task was to promote water conservation through sound irrigation designs, construction observations and water management practices. Ravneet grew up in Punjab, but also spent several years in the U.K., giving him a keen understanding of issues facing the Sikh community in Punjab and the Diaspora. Ravneet is a committed and practicing Sikh. His concern for environment is based on the view that awareness is nothing without action.

### North America Program Manager

Bandana Kaur

Bandana Kaur is the North America coordinator for EcoSikh. Bandana Kaur has a Master's in Environmental Science from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and a Bachelor's in English and Human Rights from Barnard College, Columbia University. While at Yale, Bandana received a Tropical Resources Institute Fellowship and a Jubitz Family Foundation Fellowship to research women's participation in agricultural biodiversity conservation in rural Punjab. Bandana's has also worked on climate change, clean water, forest protection, and gender issues through various civil society forums. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, being outside, and writing.

## Contact Information

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