

The Dragon Circle – TWG Logo

October 2016

We've been asked a few times about The Woodlands GREEN logo, the Dragon Circle. Today's version appears to be a dragon intertwined with a red ring. The original drawing, as displayed here, is more complex with a rich texture with two red circles. It looks hand drawn with some assistance from drafting equipment for the circles and shapes. The colors green and red might be watercolors. The dragon has 39 spikes on its spine and the shape of its head is dragon like. One notable feature is the toothed mouth biting its own tail.



The symbol of a dragon eating its own tail turns out to be pretty ancient. The *Ouroboros* (the name of the symbol) depicts a serpent or dragon biting its tail. The name originates from the Greek (*oura*) meaning "tail" and (*boros*) meaning "eating", thus "he who eats the tail". Its origins are interesting simply because they are ancient. It is found on the tomb of Tutankhamen from the 14th century BC. Some Woodlands folks may have seen this symbol in 2012 when the Tutankhamen tour visited Houston's Museum of Fine Arts.

The meaning in history has varied from era to era. Plato described it as "the first living thing created in the universe which became the earth itself." There are other mystical, fantasy, and symbolic explanations for its meaning. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ouroboros>

The symbol certainly implies something that continues, perhaps forever. Think of the circle of life or the complete recycling that occurs with all life, energy, and matter. Recycling and reuse that has been part of The Woodlands GREEN since its beginning is part of this perspective. The more mysterious part of the logo could be the dragon. Dragons have been portrayed mostly as monsters in literature and film, although there are also sweet, lovable, and helpful dragons seen in films and books.

Hopefully most people in The Woodlands can identify our own dragon. It can be seen at the southern edge of Lake Woodlands (friendly or frightening?) She spends every day guarding Woodlands Parkway and South Shore Park. She is surely the dragon in the logo. The female reference is used here because it was several active women who founded The Woodlands GREEN (first called "The Woodlands Recycles") who started our first recycling programs; who organized the first many Earth Day events; and who helped make recycling part of our day-to-day lives. Our dragon sculpture has its own history but the sculpture title refers to a serpent; *Rise of the Midgard Serpent*. *Midgard Serpent* comes from Norse mythology and is also a fearsome character created in 1952 in Marvel Comics. Our own dragon is not so fearsome and stands six feet high and 35 feet long. She was installed in 1985.

The meaning of the dragon circle for The Woodlands GREEN logo could be found in the two primary elements; the circle which embodies the nature of life and resources, and the dragon, which is an iconic local figure in The Woodlands, a neighbor rather than a fearsome creature (or perhaps a protector of our community as was the Midgard Serpent).