

# Quaker Earthcare Witness 2013 Annual Report

*Anne Mitchell, Shelley Tanenbaum, and Roy Taylor*

QEW is a network for Friends who are working on environmental concerns. We have recently improved our website to encourage Friends to learn about what is going on in Yearly and Monthly Meetings. We also have several active committees working on specific projects: the FCNL working group supports lobbying efforts on energy and environmental issues; the UN working group tracks international issues with a focus on climate change; and the Sustainability Faith and Action working group is working on divestment from fossil fuels and other economic issues. Together, we connect with each other on a spiritual level to continue this work.



We serve as a Quaker voice on environmental concerns. The past several years have been difficult financially for us, as for most non-profits. We have stayed solvent by cutting back on some of our expenses. Despite this financial setback, we were able to improve our website, maintain bi-monthly publication of *Befriending Creation*, add an electronic newsletter in the off-months, hold twice a year gatherings of our Steering Committee and produce programs and an information center at FGC. We were able to do this work because our volunteers and staff (3 part-time staff) are aware of the significance of the climate crisis we are all facing and we are determined to have our voices heard. Below are descriptions of our work for the past year.

## PUBLICATIONS

QEW maintained the bi-monthly publication of *BeFriending Creation* and introduced an electronic newsletter for the in-between months. As well, QEW offers to sign anyone up for the electronic version of *BeFriending Creation*. New sections have been added: letters from our readers; interesting projects that Monthly and Yearly Meetings are involved in; and leadings and concerns of QEW supporters.

A new trifold – [\*Contemplative Action in the Time of Climate Change\*](#) - was distributed with our annual appeal and is available on our website.

# OUTREACH

QEW continued its practice of working with Quaker and other organizations during the year. Several QEW Steering Committee members participated in the Quaker Institute for the Future's summer seminar. QEW again hosted the Earthcare Center at the FGC gathering in July. The QEW FCNL Working Group contributed to the priority setting exercise of FCNL. QEW continues to dialogue with QUNO about how QEW can support QUNO's new priority of climate change. QEW has a partnership agreement with Canadian Friends Service Committee, enabling donors in Canada to contribute to QEW and also obtain a receipt for tax purposes in Canada.

QEW began corresponding with President Obama on the climate change issue and also submitted a statement to the United Nations NGO Liaison Committee.

# PROJECTS

## Mini-Grants Project 2013

The Mini Grants Working Group (all volunteer) was active in publicizing and awarding 6 grants:

- David Schaad's eco work study abroad in Viet Nam.
- Green Street MM (Philadelphia) rain garden demonstration project storm runoff reduction project.
- Casa des Amigos Quaker Peace Center Mexico City solar water heater project.
- Sarasota FL MM first Day School Garden project
- Milwaukee WI Friends Meeting community compost site development project.
- Uganda YM tree planting project in partnership with Weare NH MM/Marian Baker traveling minister.

Plans for 2014 include:

- Increase web presence and marketing on and outside the QEW website.
- Increase emphasis on young Friends participation.
- Increase emphasis on non-US project development.

## Finca La Bella 2013 Annual Report:

The year began with a visit by three QEW members to the parceleros in Finca La Bella (see article in *BeFriending Creation*, March-April 2013). Later in the year a great deal of progress was made in negotiations between the Monteverde Institute and the parceleros on the division of the farm and the transfer of the title to the individual parcelero families. We hope to celebrate the completion of this process in 2014.

QEW has supported the Finca La Bella farm in Costa Rica for nearly 20 years.

## MEETINGS

QEW participated in the United Nations discussions on Sustainable Development Goals and in the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples. These meetings were held at the United Nations in New York. As well, through QEW accreditation, representatives from QUNO were able to participate in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Doha, November 26 - December 7 2012.

QEW again sponsored the Young Adult Friends gathering at Pendle Hill. QEW provided \$4000 to this initiative and also QEW's clerk, Shelley Tanenbaum, participated during the week.

QEW's rising clerk, Roy Taylor, was keynote speaker at the Southeast Yearly Meeting.

QEW held two Steering Committee meetings during the year: in June, hosted by Boulder Monthly Meeting and in October at the Cenacle Conference Center in Chicago. These face to face meetings provide QEW with the opportunity to worship together, share leadings and consider plans, priorities and activities for the future.

## PERSONNEL

Katherine Murray joined QEW as Publications Coordinator at the beginning of January 2013. Anne Mitchell, QEW's General Secretary for the past three years, is not renewing her contract with QEW and Shelley Tanenbaum became QEW's General Secretary in December 2013.

Roy Taylor became the clerk of QEW at its Annual Gathering in October 2013.

## LONG RANGE PLANNING

QEW set up an ad hoc long range planning committee during the year to help the organization envision its future; focus its mission; and establish programs with clear goals and deliverables.

## FINANCES

During our 2013 fiscal year, QEW supporters contributed \$83,170 to the operations of Quaker Earthcare Witness, the first upward trend in giving in several years. These funds came from individual QEW supporters, Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meetings. We received a grant from the Obadiah Brown Fund to help fund our new website. In addition, QEW has increased funding for its mini-grant projects and, for the second year, has helped finance the Young Adult Friends Gathering at Pendle Hill.

Our expenses for fiscal 2013 came in under budget – allowing the organization to stabilize its financial footing. Ending the year with a surplus allowed QEW to hire a new General Secretary, expand its commitment to inter-organization outreach, and continue its support for mini-grants and Young Adult Friends in fiscal 2014.

For fiscal 2014, the budget of QEW has been increased to \$95,617, a level that will allow the organization to effectively support our staff and, at the same time, allow the organization to engage in extensive outreach on the issues of spirituality and climate change.