

Quaker Earthcare Witness

Annual Report (November 2013 – October 2014)

We continue to embrace our role as a Quaker voice for living in peace and harmony with our fellow human beings, all species and the whole of the natural world. Our spiritual connection to all of creation guides us in our work on economic, political, and social concerns.

Quaker Earthcare Witness is facing the challenge of increasingly severe impacts from climate change and environmental degradation with renewed vigor, a strengthened sense of purpose, and a vision of the beloved community.

The ice is melting in the north. The only way to change our ways is to melt the ice in our hearts.

This is a lightly paraphrased statement from Angaangaq Angakkorsuaq, an indigenous leader from Greenland, one of the many inspiring speakers at the Religions for the Earth forum that was held at Union Theological Seminary this September as a lead up to “climate week” in New York City.

Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), issued a plea to the religious community at both the Religions for the Earth forum and at a luncheon hosted by QUNO on the day before the September 23 United Nations Climate Summit. He urged those of us in the religious community to speak out about climate change as a moral issue. His challenge to us is that the scientists who have been sounding the alarm about climate change for more than 20 years are not getting their message across. At this critical point in our history, the religious community needs to add its voices of moral concern.

As of this year, Quaker Earthcare Witness has played a larger role within the Quaker; we are nurturing and expanding our network; and we are using our Quaker voice to call for ecological justice, just as Angaangaq Anhakkorsuaq and Dr. Pachauri suggest. Our network throughout North America is made up primarily of unprogrammed Friends, but also includes a growing number of programmed Friends. We currently have about 440 Friends and 170 monthly and yearly meetings in our network.

The People’s Climate March

Whether you were marching in the streets in New York or your home community or observing this outpouring of public support for climate change as shown by the 400,000 strong People’s Climate March, a message has been delivered that action on climate change is needed now. We should all feel heartened and energized to see such massive public support for what we have been working toward for decades.

We were pleased to play a major role in organizing the Quaker contingent to the People’s Climate March in September. The key Quaker organizers came from three places: QEW, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), and New York Yearly Meeting (including 15th Street Meeting). QEW was an early sponsor of the march, which eventually included more than 100 religious groups and 1,500 organizations. We publicized the march in our journal, *Befriending Creation*, in our e-newsletter, on our website, and via Facebook and Twitter. We coordinated logistics for Quakers through our database system, allowing us to easily communicate directly with more than 100 Friends who had signed up for information (on average, each sign-up included four more March participants who were attending along with the sign-up person). There was a strong Quaker presence in two locations at the march: we

estimate that at least 300 Quakers were part of the faith contingent lining up on 58th Street and at least another 300 Quakers lined up on 81st Street.

Several other activities took place during climate week in New York where QEW had a presence. Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) set up two luncheon gatherings during the UN climate summit week to facilitate quiet diplomacy; QEW was invited to attend each of these sessions. In addition, our General Secretary attended the Union Theological Seminary Forum called “Religions for the Earth,” which was held on the Friday and Saturday preceding the march. FCNL and QUNO participated in planning for the forum. In addition, Earth Quaker Action Teams (EQAT) planned an action the day before the march and they participated in the march. We were able to publicize EQAT’s planned action for Saturday and encourage folks to join.

Communications

We published six issues of our bi-monthly journal, *Befriending Creation* and produced three e-newsletters, *QEW Resources for Earthcare Action* (electronic only) between issues. *Befriending Creation* included one themed issue on divestment, which was followed by a new section on our website providing a clearinghouse of divestment information. Articles in *Befriending Creation* spanned a great array of topics related to lived faith, sustainable actions, opportunities for engagement, and resources Friends felt led to share. Every issue generates comments (mostly favorable!) and kept the conversations going. We regularly post interesting and challenging articles on our Facebook page and Twitter, and have been seeing great growth in our number of contacts online. Archived copies of both *Befriending Creation* and *QEW Resources for Earthcare Action* can be accessed on our website at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/publications> and <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/resources-earthcare-action>, respectively.

Two new QEW trifolds were produced this year: *Energy Efficient Travel Options and Divestment as Lived Faith*. These and other trifolds are also available on our website at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/pamphlets> so that they can be printed and used as needed in Meetings. We also provided pamphlets for use in local Meetings. This year QEW saw a real upswing in the number of people requesting materials for use in their meetings. Creative Friends also designed some wonderful displays of QEW materials and messages that were displayed at Yearly Meeting gatherings.

We added a new section to our website, entitled “Get Resources for Your Meeting” (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/get-resources-your-meeting>), providing links to download materials for QEW in a Box (for meeting displays) and to order our Earthcare Witness Toolkit for Meetings (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/earthcare-witness-toolkit-meetings>). We plan in 2015 to add to this section of our website discussion questions for our most recent trifolds, so that Friends can use them as a basis for dialogues about spiritual earthcare in First Day school or in or adult education sessions.

Our website continues to grow in content and utility as a way to reach people. Earlier in our fiscal year (last November), we opened our website to Friends working on divestment from fossil fuels and we are making this information available to all. This section of our website is named “Fossil Free Friends” with all sorts of divestment related materials to share with Meetings (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/fossil-free-friends>). We have also been adding minutes and

statements on earthcare from Friends' meetings and organizations, and thus far we have quite a collection of Friends' voices to share: <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/minutes-and-statements-friends-meetings-and-organizations>.

In 2015, we plan to add resources on population, fracking, and direct use of the land, such as we did with divestment. Other possible topics we would like to develop include food and water equity and transition towns, but we are still seeking volunteers to produce content.

Meeting Visits

Our Steering Committee includes 29 representatives from 20 Yearly Meetings plus 13 at-large members. Most representatives and at-large steering committee members visit their own monthly and yearly meetings on behalf of QEW, distribute our resources, and/or provide workshops and interest groups.

This year, visits included:

Events

- a. FGC (programmed and hosted a week of presentations, provided informational displays and distributed literature)
- b. Elder presence at Young Adult Friends Continuing Rev_olution conference at Pendle Hill
- c. Distributed information at FUM

Plenary

Our General Secretary gave a plenary talk entitled "Spiritual Ecology: My Journey and Our Journey" at the yearly meeting for Southern Appalachia Yearly Meeting and Association. The text is posted on our website at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/spiritual-ecology-my-journey-and-our-journey>.

Monthly Meetings (visits, workshops and interest groups) included Brooklyn (NY), Santa Fe (NM), Pine River (MI), Durham (NC), North Central Worship Group (Merrill, WI) the Stevens Point (WI), Olympia (WA), Lopez Island (WA), Bellingham (WA), Anchorage (AK), Boulder (CO), Sandy Springs (MD) and others.

Yearly Meetings (workshops and interest groups) included Baltimore, Alaska Friends Conference, Pacific, SAYMA, Northern, North Pacific, Pacific Northwest and others.

Display included New England YM, Pacific YM, FUM, FGC, Northern YM, Britain YM, North Pacific YM, Baltimore YM, SAYMA, North Carolina Conservative, Pacific Northwest Quarter, College Park Quarter and others.

Outreach to Young Adult Friends

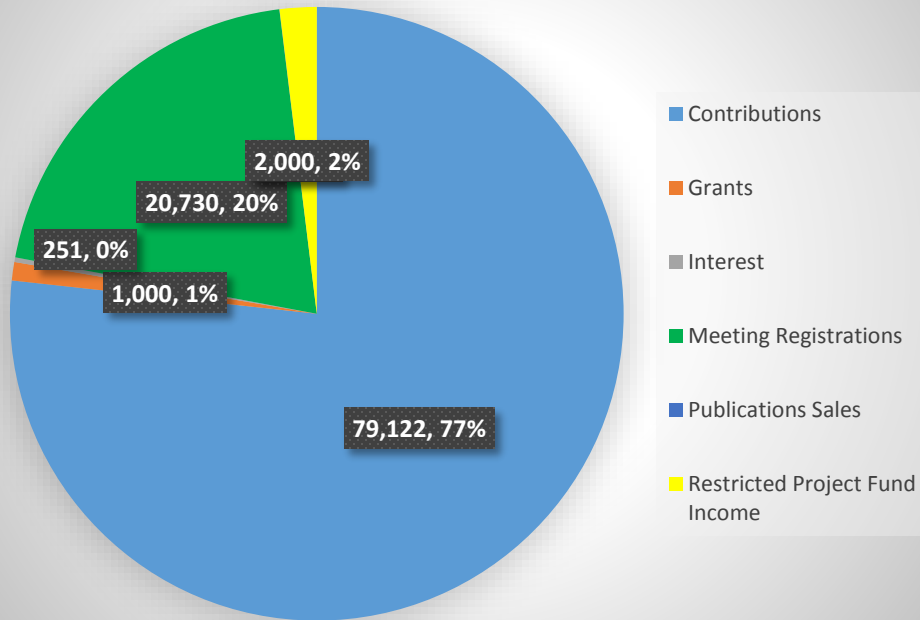
This year one of our goals was to bring more young adult Friends into our network. We co-sponsored the Pendle Hill conference, Continuing Rev_olution for a third year with a grant of \$2,000 and our clerk attended as an elder. We provided scholarships to six young adult Friends to attend our October Steering committee sessions and we included two of them as part of our

program. We encouraged all newcomers, including these young Friends, to sample our committees and working groups during our time together, and we expect that some of them will continue to be active with these committees/working groups between Steering Committee meetings. We also published several articles by young Friends in our journal this year and plan to extend this effort with intention by including an article from one young Friend in each issue of *BeFriending Creation* in 2015.

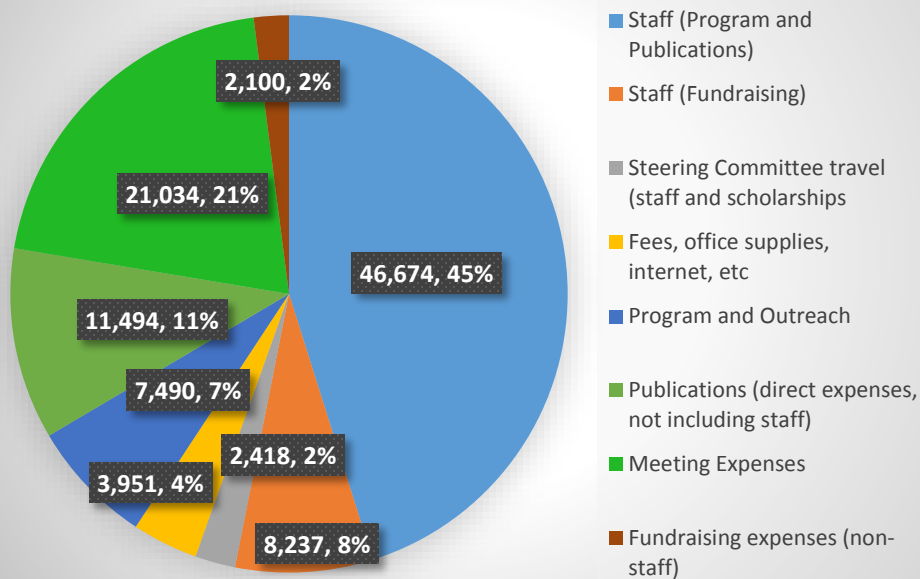
Finances

We have consistently raised on average \$75-80,000 each year for the past several years (excluding the cost of our steering committee meetings, as we bring in enough registration fees to pay for these events). Last year's (November 2013-October 2014) income was no different. We had hoped to expand our network and publications, but were limited by our income. Most of our expenditures go directly to publication costs (printing, postage, editing), outreach (visits to monthly and yearly meetings, and events), and maintaining our network (steering committee meetings, conference calls, database maintenance). We estimate that our staff (two part-time employees and one bookkeeper consultant) spend about 10% of our budget on fundraising (15 percent of staff salaries plus the cost of the annual appeal). Nearly all of our income comes from monthly/yearly Meeting donations and individual donations. Charts below show our expenses and income distribution.

2013-14 Income (\$103,113)



2013-14 Expenses (\$103,398)



What's Next?

As a result of our organizing for the Peoples' Climate March in 2014, we have strengthened our connections with other Quaker organizations (primarily FCNL, QUNO, and EQAT) and we have built a larger constituent base. The successful march in New York City is the beginning of what needs to be ongoing pressure from civil society to create a carbon-neutral future. We need to be part of coalitions as they develop leading up to the Peru Conference of the Parties (COP) in December 2014 and in Paris, December 2015. We will disseminate information to our network about actions.

In September a joint statement about what we are called to do about climate change was issued by QEW, QUNO, FCNL, FWCC, CFSC, AFSC, QCEA, several monthly meetings, and a few other Quaker organizations. This was timed to precede the September 23 United Nations climate summit. We helped revise the statement in December and we are inviting Friends' Meetings to sign on as a statement from the Quaker community. You can read both the September and December statements on our website at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/dec-2014-facing-challenge-climate-change-shared-statement-quaker-groups> .

We will continue to expand the resources that we distribute through our website and in our publications. We have already started gathering information on population and on land use to be shared soon. Other topics we expect to explore include transition towns and fracking. These topic areas will supplement the web resource we have already developed on divestment from fossil fuels—we expect to maintain and update this resource, as well.

We will expand our outreach to the Quaker community using resources created this year by our outreach committee for Yearly Meeting Reps (material that can be used by both YM reps and at-large steering committee members). This year's Outreach committee developed a plan to maintain ongoing connections with YM reps for the coming year.

Our working group, Friends Centering on Unity of Nature, is exploring the greening of Faith & Practice. They are opening this conversation widely and would welcome input from all sources that have tried to answer the issues of human centrality and dominion that exist within our texts. How we use words matters.

In 2015, the Friends General Conference Gathering is in North Carolina with the theme "Seeking Wholeness." A joint effort including several QEW Friends and coordinated by our Clerk, Roy Taylor, will provide a workshop entitled *Seeking Wholeness of Creation: Finding yourself within the Sustainability Spectrum*. We expect to provide resources and programming linked to FGC's theme at our Earthcare Center.

December 2014