

Quaker Earthcare Witness is a network of North American Friends (Quakers) and other like-minded people who are taking spirit-led action to address the ecological and social crises of the world, emphasizing Quaker process and testimonies.



QUAKER EARTHCARE WITNESS

Our Work This Year

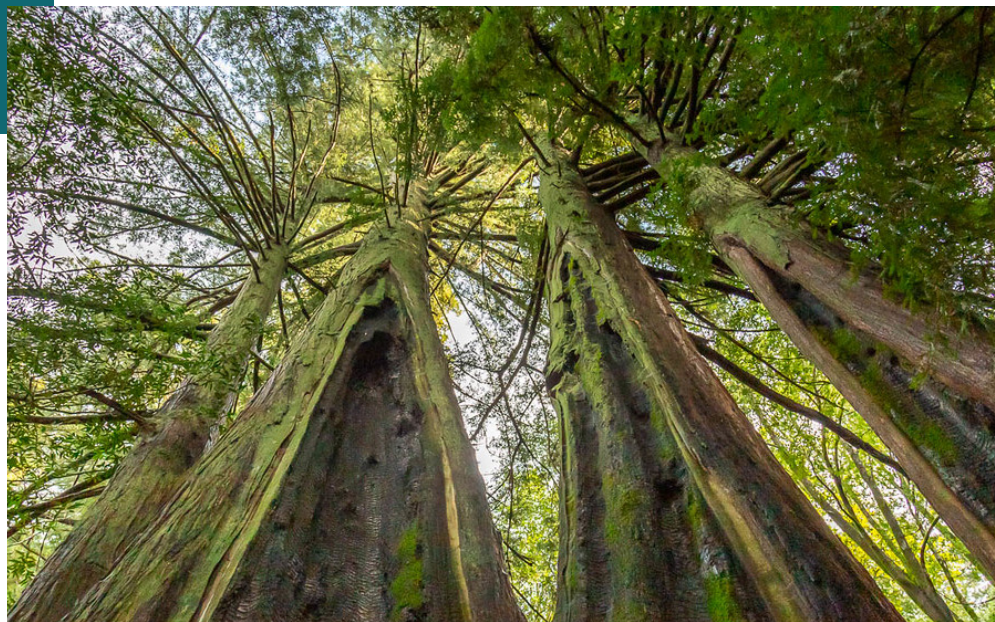
Quaker Earthcare Witness connects Friends who strive to live in kinship with the natural world and who support environmental justice.

We are dedicated to a spiritual transformation within the Society of Friends by continually seeking the Light in all our endeavors and depending on the testimonies and Friends' process in our work.

Our spiritual connection with the natural world has led us to recognize the urgency of the critical issues of our time, including climate change, biodiversity, ocean and soil depletion, and overpopulation, and to act on these concerns through the lens of environmental justice.

We provide inspiration and resources to Friends throughout North America by freely distributing information in our newsletter, [BeFriending Creation](#), and on our website, [QuakerEarthcare.org](#), as well as through popular social media channels like [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

This year can be described in one word: unprecedented. The confluence of crises has spurred many of us to action while we are simultaneously reeling from the depths of sorrow.



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

For over 33 years, QEW has been alerting the Society of Friends (and beyond) to the multiple ecological crises we are facing, and most of these crises have worsened during that time. In 2020, extreme weather was rampant—fires, floods, hurricanes. We also faced a global pandemic, in part a result of ecological encroachment on wildlife habitat. At the same time, many of us participated in a racial justice uprising in the United States that rose up from centuries of oppression and terror in communities of color. And we experienced extreme challenges to US democracy.

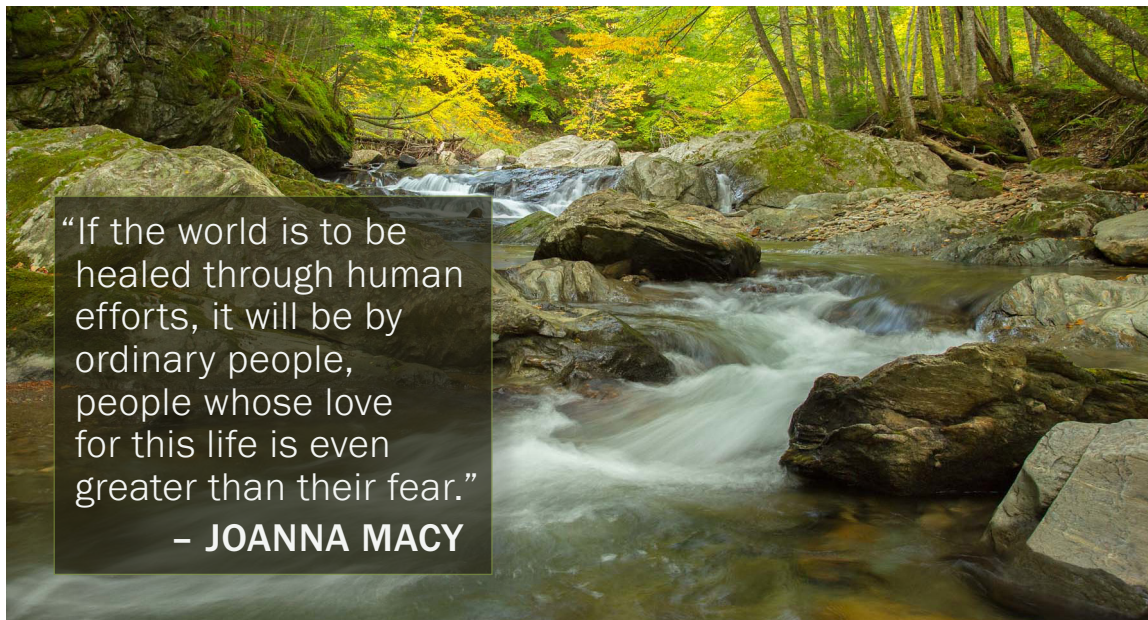
We are grateful for the support of our thriving network of Friends engaging alongside us.

QEW's Vision and Witness

WE ARE CALLED to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God.

WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God's Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right, and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the earth's ecological integrity.

WE PROMOTE these truths by being patterns and examples, by communicating our message, and by providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship to the earth.



Learning and Growing in 2020

We are a supportive community for Friends, inspiring and empowering action while also providing a place for reflection and solace. The Quaker Earthcare Witness network is responding to the challenges brought forward by 2020 in multiple ways.

QEW has faced the challenges of the pandemic by pivoting to connect with Friends electronically. We:

- » held both of our Steering Committee meetings in 2020 on Zoom (new for us),
- » hosted six worship sharing session via Zoom, attracting many Friends new to QEW,
- » made twenty presentations to monthly and yearly meetings,
- » hosted four presentations during the FGC virtual Gathering, and
- » sponsored a UN side event on food and water in the African Diaspora.

We have responded to the racial justice uprising by re-evaluating our aspirations and reviewing our current practices.

- » We will prioritize anti-racism work in our Steering Committee meetings.
- » We will continue to lift up stories in our publications on environmental justice.
- » We will continue to join coalitions like the Poor People's Campaign, to advocate for racial justice and to support the Green New Deal.
- » We will take time to reflect on our role as an organization and as individuals to dismantle racism.

We have responded to the ecological crises that we are facing by increasing our connections in the Society of Friends.

- » Our newsletter is going to 25% more households and groups than last year.
- » We have launched QEW Presents! as a way to increase our presence in Meetings and Churches, with nine QEW Friends available to do virtual workshops and talks.
- » Our new website and logo are being designed to be more accessible and engaging.

Publications and Communications

We produced four print and electronic issues of *Befriending Creation*, a 12-page newsletter designed to promote the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness by stimulating discussions and actions; sharing insights, practical ideas, and news of our network's work across the US and Canada; and encouraging a sense of community and spiritual connection with all Creation among Friends.

Highlights this year included:

October-December 2019: Eco-spirituality (*Listening to Roots, Walking in Beauty, Beckoned by Living Trees*), Indigenous wisdom (*Flows Repeatedly: Learnings from the Menominee Nation*), Social-justice farming and Permaculture (*Farming for Social Change and The Art of Designing Beneficial Relationships*), Indigenous Rights (*For the Love of the Land*), Empowerment for youth - and all ages (*Finding Steady Ground*).

January-March 2020: International climate policy (*Is (the) Paris (Agreement) Burning?, Roadmaps to a Better Future*), Youth Empowerment (*Young and Old for Climate Justice*), Interfaith spirituality (*Interfaith Earthcare Touchstones*), Nature's Bounty (*The Earth is Us, gifts*), Population (*Considering Limits and Clearness Committee on Kids?*), Quakers in the Anthropocene (*Collective Evolution in the Face of Climate Crisis and Nothing Lowly in the Universe - book review*), Action (*Philadelphia Friends Confront Climate Crisis*).

April-June 2020: Pandemic (*In Uncertain Times, What I am Learning, How Will I Share My Check?, Mutual Aid and Local Food Sufficiency*), Eco-spirituality (*Love in the Wilderness, If I Were a Poet*), Climate and Conflict (*Endless War, Endless Environmental Harm*), Population (*Population is Personal*), Land Restoration (*Quakers Caring for God's Creation*), Youth Empowerment (*Youth Activists' Earth Day Demands*).



BeFriending Creation

A Publication of
QUAKER EARTH CARE WITNESS

Affirming our essential unity with nature • Vol. 33 Number 3 • JULY-AUG-SEPT 2020

A Toxic Factory Will Create a Toxic Future

By Bobbi Blok, Barb Adams, and Catherine Jozwik

CHILDREN DESERVE clean air, water, soil and a safe healthy area where they can play and grow. But a factory that manufactures wool-like insulation from spun-melted rock in Ranson, Jefferson County, West Virginia, will make that impossible. Rockwool, a Danish company, is constructing a factory that will burn 1.6 million cubic ft. of fracked gas and over 90 tons of coal a day, and is permitted to emit 156,000 tons of hazardous pollutants including particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5, similar to asbestos), volatile organic compounds, methane, sulphur dioxide, and ozone. Rockwool claims to be a "green" company making a "green" product, yet it would be extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, to build such a factory today in environmentally conscious Denmark. Although located in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, the "Significant Impact Area" expands in a 35-mile radius and encompasses bordering northwest Virginia, western Maryland, and Pennsylvania, impacting a total of 710,000 people, including parts of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. We want to share with you the critical health, environmental and justice concerns associated with this industrial nightmare. **Environmental injustice:** This project will create an environmental sacrifice zone less than 400 yards from North Jefferson Elementary School, a Title 1 school that serves economically underserved families. It is also located within two miles of three other public schools which serve nearly 30 percent of the county's school children. **Hazardous air pollution emissions:** Our children's health will be threatened because of the hazardous air pollution emitted near their schools and neighborhoods. Children and adults already suffering from asthma will have their respiratory challenges exacerbated.

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Photo of Bobbi Blok by Samuel Wright

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BeFriending Creation www.quakerearthcare.org Our quarterly newsletter, *BeFriending Creation*.

July-September 2020: Environmental Justice (*A Toxic Factory Will Create a Toxic Future, Sharing Love and Knowledge in the time of Covid 19*), Anti-Racism (*Outgoing Epistle of the 2020 FGC Pre-Gathering of Friends of Color and Their Families, Weeding Out Systemic Oppression in our Garden, Collective Community Resilience, Statement from the Clerk and General Secretary*), Pandemic (*Connected Crisis: Covid 19 and Climate Change, Pacific Yearly Meeting's Mutual Aid Experiment*), Eco-spirituality (*I am a Tree, Plowing the Prairie*).

In collaboration with Friends Journal, we produced a **QuakerSpeak video** that has had 5000 views (release date was in November 2019). Four QEWF Friends, Shelley Tanenbaum (General Secretary), Hayley Hathaway (Communications Coordinator), Barbara Adams (representative from Baltimore Yearly Meeting) and Beverly Ward (Field Secretary for Earthcare, Southeastern Yearly Meeting) are featured. They describe their passion for Earthcare, the urgency of global climate change and environmental justice, and QEWF's work.

Our **website and social media presence** are useful resources for sharing material and we continue to see an increase in traffic. Each week, we distribute a graphic on Facebook and Instagram and we regularly post articles of interest.

Quaker Activism and Education

We offered programs during the **virtual Friends General Conference annual gathering**, including hosting four presentations, showcasing what Friends are doing regarding Earthcare. We offered presentations on Climate Despair and Empowerment, Regenerative Agriculture, Visioning the Climate Future, and Youth Activism. We also sponsored **three worship sharing sessions** leading up to the Gathering and **three sessions** in the fall.

We launched **QEW Presents!**, featuring nine speakers who are available to virtually visit with yearly and monthly meetings and churches and offer talks on a wide variety of topics. Our General Secretary, Communications Coordinator, and members of our Steering Committee presented workshops and talks at yearly meetings including North Pacific Yearly Meeting, Intermountain Yearly Meeting, Southeastern Yearly Meeting, South Central Yearly Meeting, Illinois Yearly Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting, and Alaska Friends Conference; we also presented workshops and talks at numerous monthly meetings including Durham NC, Charlotte NC, Live Oak CA, Chico CA, Humboldt CA, Birmingham AL, Atlanta GA, Bloomington IN, Buffalo NY, Memphis TN, and Camas Friends Church WA.

We joined coalitions for the **youth-led global climate strike** in April and the **Poor People's Campaign**.

And we filled growing requests for resources from individuals and yearly and monthly meetings.

Enhanced Local Earthcare Projects

Each year, QEW offers **mini-grants** to Quaker meetings, churches, and other Quaker organizations to support hand-on projects that foster earthcare.

Examples include gardens, reforestation, clean and efficient water and energy systems, and community educational programs.

In 2020, we raised money through **GoFundMe** to crowdfund our mini grants program.



Nature Photos in this report by Kathy Barnhart, Strawberry Creek Meeting, California

Supported Environmental Justice in the African Diaspora

Our United Nations Working Group sponsored events in July 2020 as part of the **United Nations High Level Policy Forum** in New York City, following on our successful food/water sovereignty side events in 2017 - 2019.

This year's side event featured three dynamic speakers: Dr. Nancy Abwalaba Owano of Pawn University in Kenya, shared about water and sanitation issues (the situation is exacerbated by climate change and poor sanitation increases the possibility of diseases like covid-19); Elizabeth Wathuti, known as Liz Mazingira, founded the Green Generation Initiative in Kenya, which addresses issues like deforestation, pollution and environmental injustices through conservation; and Dr. Antoinette Jackson, chair of the Anthropology Department at the University of South Florida, presented on the connections between tourism, colonization, and racism.



Our Steering Committee met virtually this year.

Finances

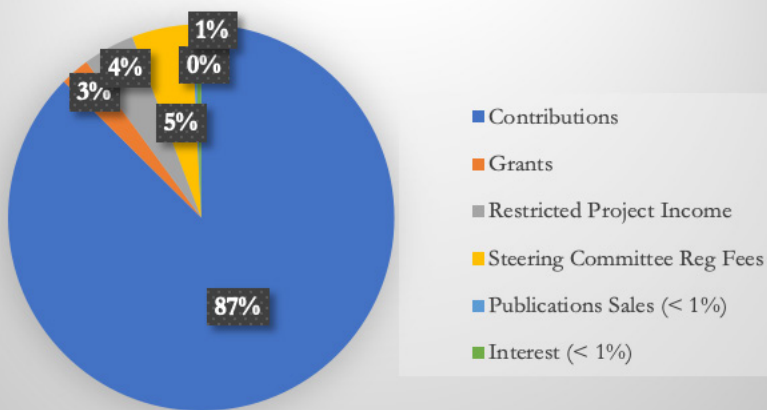
This fiscal year, we **increased our budget** to more adequately pay our staff, in accordance with U.S. Department of Labor standards. We were delighted to have been successful in raising our budget.

Normally, in addition to staff time, 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 spend about 10% of our budget on fundraising (15% of staff salaries plus the cost of the annual appeal). Nearly all of our income comes from monthly/yearly meeting donations and individual donations. However, this was not a "normal" year and some of our expenses were reduced resulting in a slight surplus. We will use those funds wisely in 2020-21.

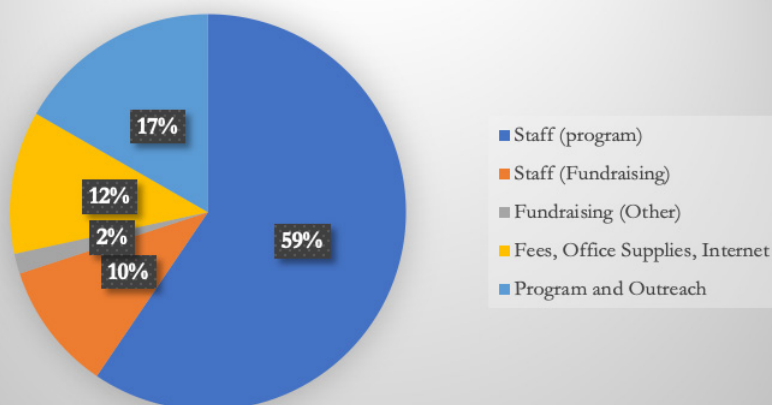
We primarily raise money from individuals and from monthly meeting donations.

Charts below show our expenses and income distribution.

2019-20 Income (\$124,955)



2019-20 Expenses (\$116,996)



Steering Committee

Two Steering Committee meetings were held virtually during this time period: April 23-26 and October 8-11. With just about a month to plan, we rapidly converted our scheduled in-person spring meeting from a visit with Durham NC Friends to Zoom meetings. As a result, we nearly doubled our attendance plus many North Carolina Friends who had already been encouraged to attend these sessions were able to join us virtually. Some highlights included worship sharing and presentations by [Carol Barta on Regenerative Agriculture](#) and [Jennie Ratcliffe on her book, *Nothing Lowly in the Universe*](#).

Our October Steering Committee meeting focused on anti-racism. Our worship sharing queries intertwined the themes of the racial justice uprising with environmental justice. Each committee and working group was asked to consider queries ahead of the session about racial justice and include their responses in reports. We included two evening training sessions. Friends came together from Nova Scotia to Alaska, from Florida to Mexico.

Our **50-member Steering Committee** includes **30 representatives from 20 Yearly Meetings** plus **20 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.

Staff

We have a **General Secretary**, Shelley Tanenbaum, and a **Communications Coordinator**, Hayley Hathaway, plus a part-time **bookkeeper consultant**, Holly Wilder.



Join QEW

- » Share your Earthcare ministry with us.
- » Invite QEW to visit your meeting to talk about what individuals and meetings can do in these challenging times.
- » Share *BeFriending Creation*.
- » Make sure your yearly meeting has a representative to QEW.
- » Start an Earthcare group at your meeting. Use Quaker Earthcare Witness materials in your First Day school.
- » Share our literature, like pamphlets on key environmental issues, with your meeting or church, and at special events.
- » Apply for a Mini-Grant to support a project.
- » [Donate, and encourage your meeting to join our network.](#)

What's Next? Looking Forward

How do we build a sustainable and life-enhancing future in these challenging times? QEW grew out of a strong leading among Friends that our future depends on a spiritual transformation in our relationships with each other and the natural world.

That potential to embrace a new way of relating to our environment and to each other is needed more than ever.

This year, we will reach out to Friends and beyond to:

- » Broaden our connections and more widely distribute our resources with an updated website,
- » Expand our reach with plans to connect with monthly and yearly meetings: we will be offering workshops and forums that encourage Friends to act boldly, grounded spiritually in care for our Earth,
- » Produce our quarterly publication, *BeFriending Creation*,
- » Work with partner organizations to promote environmental justice,
- » Speak out publicly to support Friends actions on Earthcare
- » Sponsor an international forum on water in the African diaspora, building on the success of our four previous forums in 2017-2020,
- » Offer mini-grants for hands-on local Earthcare projects.

Thank you, Friends!

STAY IN TOUCH

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