

*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

Mary Conrow Coelho

## Witnessing the Sacred Depth of Nature

There are remarkable discoveries now offered to Quaker Earthcare Witness that can greatly strengthen its work and witness.

One evening in the early 1990s, a small group gathered to listen to a talk in a video series describing the changes in worldview brought by discoveries in science during the last century. To my complete surprise and shock, the physicist Brian Swimme said that a “full teaching of physics and geology requires teaching the interior, *non-visualizable* depth that pervades all of matter.” What could he be talking about?

Swimme said that this nonvisible energetic interiority is 99.99% of the atom! I was deeply moved. Can it be? Did this mean that my body, the trees, the earth, and the elephants—all made of atoms—are comprised of this nonvisible reality? We learned that evening that when all the particles and waves are removed from the space around us, the nonvisible energetic reality—a dimension of our world hidden to daily consciousness—is still present.

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## BEFRIENDING CREATION

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**Image Above:** A watercolor by Mary Conrow Coelho. See more at [NewUniverseStory.com](http://NewUniverseStory.com).



## From the Clerks' Table

Friends,

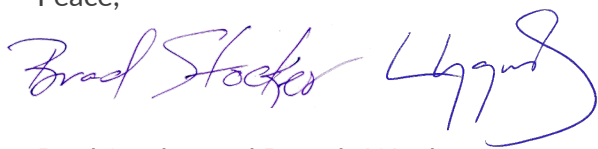
As your new co-clerks (as of October), we would like to tell you a bit about what Quaker Earthcare Witness means to us and why we took on the responsibility of clerking.

I, Beverly, have been a member of QEW Steering Committee for several years and serve as Field Secretary for Earthcare from Southeastern Yearly Meeting. QEW is an important spiritual and intellectual resource. Within our community, I know that my sense of urgency and love for Creation are shared. Among QEW's members, representatives, and affiliates is a vast network of scientific knowledge and boundless support for leadings. As co-clerk, I hope to contribute to these efforts and also bring my strong commitment to Earthcare and deep study of social impact assessment.

I, Brad, am a Southeastern Yearly Meeting and Miami Friends Meeting representative to Quaker Earthcare Witness. When I was working at Miami Dade College with the Earth Ethics Institute, we struggled to include the New Universe Story (an infusion of spirit and science) into all the curricula. I'm delighted to be part of QEW where that sense of spirit is central. My service to Quaker Earthcare Witness is the minimum I can do for Earth and the legacy for my grandchildren.

Both of us look forward to a productive future for Quaker Earthcare Witness and are very pleased to be able to work together on this endeavor of co-clerking QEW.

Peace,



Brad Stocker and Beverly Ward,  
Co-Clerks, Quaker Earthcare Witness

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# Our Vision & 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.

## BeFriending Creation

We publish *BeFriending Creation* to promote the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness, stimulate discussion and action, share insights, practical ideas, news of our actions, and encourage a sense of community and spiritual connection with all Creation.

Opinions expressed are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of Quaker Earthcare Witness, or of the Religious Society of Friends. The editor is responsible for unsigned items. Please share our work widely and broadly, always attributing it to Quaker Earthcare Witness.

Quaker Earthcare Witness is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Donate at [QuakerEarthcare.org](https://QuakerEarthcare.org).

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Remarkable scientific discoveries in the world of physics can offer Friends a transformed worldview and a fundamentally changed understanding of the nature of matter. Many of us learned as students of science that the natural world is without sacred depth and presence. When scientists first recognized and investigated the interior dimension of the atom, they found nothing, so it was identified as a vacuum. Now we know, to our great astonishment, that the apparent emptiness of the atom is actually comprised of a highly energetic, nonvisible reality that cannot be measured directly. Rather the energy is determined based on the energy of the particles emitted from it. Swimme calls the nonvisible reality the “All-Nourishing Abyss.” I call it the “seamless plenum.”

We have long known that our daily consciousness is not aware of all the dimensions of our identity. There is centuries-long witness by mystics and contemplatives as well as by artists, musicians, and poets of transformative experiences bringing an awakening to dimensions of the human person and the natural world. In *The Heart of Matter*, Teilhard de Chardin, a mystic and one of the first people to develop a spirituality in the context of evolution, wrote of “the Diaphany of the Divine at the heart of a glowing universe—as I have experienced it through contact with the earth—the Divine radiating from the depth of blazing Matter.” Quakers have long witnessed experiences of the Light within. The Celtic/Christian tradition, as J. Philip Newell carefully describes, offers a compelling example of the integration of the sacred nature of the natural world with the Christian witness. He writes in his new book *Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul*, that the “energies of the divine are viewed as both encompassing and interpenetrating the human and the natural world.”

When the discovery of the “All-Nourishing Abyss” is held within the 13.8-billion-year story of our origins, we are led to recognize a fundamentally changed view of the natural world, the Earth, and our very being. While the Earth is remarkably diverse, there is a shared fundamental commonality given the nature of the interiority of the atom and of matter. Scientist David Bohm told us of a new “non-fragmentary worldview.” Given the energetic interiority of matter, we know every bush is burning. We can abandon the dangerous and erroneous objectification of the natural world. We know with increased confidence that the sacred presence is integral to our being,



Image painted by the author. She writes, “This magnificent 400-year-old red oak...was in the backyard of the house where Thomas Berry studied and wrote for a number of years. He taught us to move from a human-centered to an earth-centered norm of reality and value, so that, in these transitional times, we may discover our authentic role in the great work required of us as a result of our new understanding of the depth of human belonging to the earth and universe.”

**We will recover our sense of wonder and our sense of the sacred only if we appreciate the universe beyond ourselves as a revelatory experience of the numinous presence when all things come into being.**

**– Thomas Berry**

body and soul. Thomas Berry wrote in *Dream of the Earth* that science has given us a new revelatory experience. It has given us a new intimacy with the Earth.

To adequately address the climate crisis, we must not only do the essential work of remedying the damage to the natural world, preventing further degradation, but we must also address the spiritual crisis in the West. Western science’s earlier objectification of matter has been one of the underlying reasons for nearly unbridled destruction. It has diminished our felt, soulful connection with the earth, bringing a costly narrowing of our consciousness.

The witness of QEW will be greatly strengthened as we enter into and teach the wisdom within our transformed worldview. We must urgently speak Friends’ truth within these changes as they carry the hope that there can be fundamental change in consciousness as we know ourselves as sacred beings within a sacred Earth. We can speak to the spiritual longings of people that—together with the natural world—find a remarkable spiritual identity as a sacred whole.

Mary Conrow Coelho is the author of the new book *The Depth of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics and Healing* and is a member of Cambridge (MA) Friends Meeting.

## Queries:

- » Does the discovery of the seamless plenum by physicists change or deepen your assumptions about your identity and that of the natural world?
- » We are learning that our origins arose within the 13.8 billion year story of our evolving universe. What does it mean to you to know that your body is made of elements that originated in the stars?

Pamela Haines

## Midwifery

A regular high point in my week is being in touch with a handful of young climate activists. Through a young man who stayed in our spare room while doing student fossil fuel divestment work and then went on to be one of the founders of the Sunrise Movement, I met another young woman on their Pennsylvania staff who introduced me to others. Just getting to know these lovely and deeply committed people is a joy in itself. Being able to be of use to them is an honor.

I think of one of the young women with whom I now do weekly hour-long calls. We have developed a little routine. We start with self-appreciation, since it's so easy to put all our attention on either our mistakes or the things we have not yet been able to accomplish. Then we exchange listening time, reviewing our emotional state and focusing on whatever we can vent or let go of to free up more attention and flexible thinking in the present. Finally, we check whether there's a puzzle she's facing at work that needs solving, or a knotty problem that needs untangling.

Often there's some small thing. She describes the situation. I listen closely, and ask questions to clarify. What does she want? Where does she feel on solid ground? Even if there are things she isn't sure of, is there a piece of the puzzle she is able to hold out with complete confidence? What is a doable next step? What is the right time, and who are the right people to go to with it?

It's clear to me that I don't know the answers. There's so much I don't know! Their organizational structure has never been described to me. I'm not exactly sure of her job description or her relationship to decision-makers. I'm not an expert in the types of campaigns they are running and certainly can't name the strategies that will allow them to succeed.

But I can provide an open space for the problem to be considered. I can ensure that this space is appreciative and free from prescription or judgment. I can listen and probe for what rings true. I can play the role of midwife. And more often than not the labor is quick and painless and the solution slips right out. What had been a worrisome muddle in her mind has become clear enough that she is ready—often eager—to take a confident next step.

Sometimes, of course, the problem is not one with a solution that is easy to think through. People lose track of themselves and each other in the midst of oppression and stress; they bring old and dysfunctional patterns of taking over or going quiet to their group interactions; old feelings of discouragement or desperation or self-blame gum up the works. There is time to tend to these issues in the middle section of our meeting, with attention to feelings of anger, fear, or grief that need to be released so that more space to think can be opened up.

This young woman, and the others that I listen to, are among the full-time staff of a movement that is mobilizing tens of thousands of young people in an effort that may play a critical role in securing a future for our species on this planet. As I do what I can to keep them working well together toward their goals—to increase clarity, restore confidence, amplify thoughtful voices, avoid missteps, seize opportunities, maximize the impact of scarce resources, strengthen relationships—I choose to believe that my small acts of midwifery are part of the labor process to bring a new world to birth.

Pamela Haines, member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting is author of *Money and Soul, That Clear and Certain Sound; Finding Solid Ground in Perilous Times*, and a poetry collection, *Alive in this World*.



The largest fiddleneck, an endangered species that the University of California Botanical Garden is growing for seeds to replant. Photo by Kathy Barnhart.

Lindsey Fielder Cook

## Recognizing a Human Right to a Healthy Environment

On October 8, 2021, we witnessed a remarkable achievement at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. After years of advocacy from civil society, faith communities, and champion government voices, 43 of the 47 Members of the Council voted for a resolution to recognize a human right to a healthy environment. No country voted against, and only the Russian Federation, China, India, and Japan abstained.

The UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights and the Environment, Professor David Boyd of Canada, described this recognition as an historic breakthrough, a witness that “everyone, everywhere, has a human right to live in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.” A core group of countries led political efforts—Costa Rica, the Maldives, Morocco, Slovenia and Switzerland—while civil society organizations pressed onwards with regional advocacy, collecting thousands of support signatures from organizations and faith communities worldwide, including Quaker organizations like QEW and several Yearly Meetings.

Recognition of a human right to a healthy environment can have, in the words of the UN Special Rapporteur, “life-changing potential.” The 2010 UN recognition of water and sanitation as a human right led to significantly improved access to clean water and sanitation in a range of countries worldwide. This most recent recognition, Boyd said, “will spark constitutional changes and stronger environmental laws, with positive implications for air quality, clean water, healthy soil, sustainably produced food, green energy, climate change, biodiversity, and the use of toxic substances.”

In 2010, the US objected to a human right to water and sanitation. The US also objected to recognizing a human right to a healthy environment in 2021. However, at the time of the October vote, the US was not a Member of the Council. The US withdrew from the Council in 2018, rejoined in 2021 under President Biden, and will regain a Membership vote in 2022.

US diplomats have expressed their objection to a human right to a healthy environment, explaining that they need greater clarity over the legal basis for the right, noting that once an individual has a recognized “right,” a State has a corresponding obligation. During preparatory discussions at the UN, the US

expressed concern that there was no existing human right to a healthy environment, to which the former UN Special Rapporteur and US law professor, John Knox, explained this was precisely why the Council, after years of research, was called to recognize a new human right.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights was created after the horrors of World War II. “All human beings,” it begins, “are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” The Declaration commits signatory States to protecting the very fundamentals so violently stripped in the war and resulting in over 50 million people dead. A human right to a healthy environment was not imagined then. Today, however, we have peer-reviewed scientific findings concluding that current rates of environmental destruction, and rates of greenhouse gas emissions driving global heating, would lead to many more million dead (and thousands of species extinctions). The Human Rights Council gave witness to this new reality.

This issue will be brought to the UN General Assembly in New York, where an adoption would strengthen the legal standing of a human right to a healthy environment. For Americans active on environment and climate change concerns, advocacy engagement with US decision makers will be critical to avoid the US Mission to the UN from blocking further efforts to recognize a human right to a healthy environment. We have a precedent: the 1948 Declaration was possible not only because of a brief geo-political window soon shut by the Cold War, but also because of an American, Eleanor Roosevelt, whose determination and moral clarity were essential to the Declaration’s creation and adoption. To this very day, the Declaration grounds all of the work at the Quaker UN Office in Geneva. And this author, an American, longs to see the US government again leading with moral clarity to protect all human rights, including a right to a healthy environment on which our future existence depends.

Lindsey Fielder Cook is the Representative for the Human Impacts of Climate Change, at the Quaker UN Office in Geneva. Prior to her retraining in climate change and sustainable development, she worked with the UN on human rights and humanitarian efforts in conflict zones. She is a Quaker, and was born in New York City.



Jonathan Ogle

## Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT) Takes on Vanguard

The world's biggest asset managers have a big problem. Companies such as BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street manage trillions of dollars of investment on behalf of millions of investors. Even while they sign commitments to make their own office operations carbon neutral, they have been investing hundreds of billions of dollars in destroying the future. Climate activists and even investors are increasingly paying attention to these investment firms' large-scale support for fossil fuels, deforestation, and other climate destructive projects, which often directly violate the human rights of indigenous peoples and frontline communities.

The amount of investment is not trivial. As Bill McKibben wrote in the *New Yorker* in September 2021, financial firms are providing "the oxygen on which the fire of global warming burns." Until now, regardless of public discourse about climate change, fossil fuel companies and other polluters have been able to count on an unceasing flood of hundreds of billions of dollars to continue to expand and pollute. That reliable investment stream props up perceived value and maintains the fiction that these are "good" investments. But signs of change are in the air.

Activists and advocates in the international BlackRock's Big Problem campaign succeeded in getting BlackRock to start slowly taking climate change into account. They have a long way to go, but it shows that change is possible, and pressure from us is the key to making it happen.

BlackRock is the largest asset manager in the world. The second largest is Vanguard. It's time for Vanguard to step up.

Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT, pronounced "equate") is a grassroots, nonviolent action group including Quakers and people of diverse beliefs, who join with millions of people around the world fighting for a just and sustainable economy. In late 2021, just as the EQAT board was discerning that it was time to lay down our last campaign, we were invited to take on a key role in the international campaign to shift Vanguard, based in Malvern, Pennsylvania near EQAT's Philadelphia roots. It felt like way opening.

Vanguard directs the investment of \$8 trillion in assets. That makes Vanguard a significant shareholder in an astoundingly large list of major corporations. Vanguard is the world's largest investor in coal and one of the two largest investors in oil and natural gas. Vanguard has also invested billions of dollars in some of the largest, dirtiest fossil fuel projects currently planned or being developed. Moreover, as a shareholder, Vanguard has shown an appalling lack of support for climate-related shareholder resolutions.

As part of the international Vanguard's Very Big Problem Campaign, EQAT aims to get Vanguard to use its leverage as a massive shareholder and investor to support climate action, not continued destruction. Vanguard can begin immediately with voting for pro-climate shareholder resolutions and pressuring companies across the board to

develop aggressive climate plans which prioritize human rights and indigenous rights.

Currently a laggard in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) offerings, they need to make fossil fuel screened ESG funds their default offering. Finally, they should implement an exit strategy to divest from fossil fuels and other companies that are not committing to acting now on climate change.

Vanguard has built their \$8 trillion business out of the retirement savings of millions of people earning a middle class income, yet they are using that money in ways that damage frontline communities, fuel climate change, and destroy the future the company claims to be helping people save for. Whether we live next to an incinerator or pipeline or far from one, whether we have a retirement account with Vanguard or are barely making ends meet, we all have a stake in the future Vanguard is destroying.

In my life, I have found myself attracted to growing food, reducing my personal waste, imagining myself living a life of material simplicity. But taking care of this precious Earth requires us to not ignore the money. If the asset managers redirect their investments, massive streams of money can be diverted away from climate chaos now.

Jonathan Ogle teaches high school students at a Friends School and currently serves on the EQAT Board.



Eileen Flanagan

## Vanguard Customers Have an Important Role to Play, so Don't Move Your Money (Yet)!

As soon as Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT) announced that we had joined the international campaign to pressure Vanguard to become a climate leader, we started hearing from Quakers and others who were Vanguard customers that they were eager to move their money to funds that are not financing climate catastrophe. I was heartened by this desire to invest with integrity, while being clear that the impact of our efforts will be much greater if we wait, organize, and take action together.

Before joining EQAT, I didn't understand the importance of collective action. Most of my actions to slow climate change were individual and small, relatively speaking, which left me feeling powerless. Joining EQAT helped me understand how collectively we can have a major impact if we act strategically, focusing our energy where it will have the greatest effect. I still hang my laundry to dry and compost my kitchen scraps, but I now think of these as individual acts of integrity, like spiritual practices. To contribute to the scale of change that's needed, we must collectively challenge business as usual.

Collective efforts have already shifted major financial institutions away from coal, including major asset manager Blackrock. In 2015, EQAT was successful at pressuring the bank PNC to stop financing mountaintop removal coal mining. During that campaign we learned that many Quakers and others were eager to move their money out of a company financing that destructive practice, but participants weren't thinking of it as a collective action, so they didn't necessarily tell us if and how much money they were moving. We only started asking several months into the campaign, so our official number of \$3 million moved out of PNC doesn't include those early money movers. This time, we are collecting customer names from the beginning so we can use the natural leverage that customers have systematically.

**To contribute to the scale of change that's needed, we must collectively challenge business as usual.**



Photo by Rachael Warriner

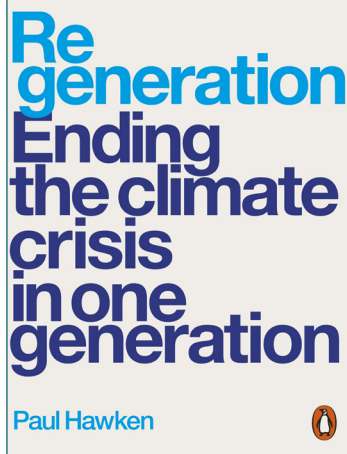
Fossil fuel companies and other major contributors to climate chaos rely not only on loans from banks, but also on the asset managers who buy their stock in bulk if the companies are publicly traded. Many of us who are fortunate enough to have funds with Vanguard may be upset to hear that it is the world's biggest investor in coal and one of the two biggest investors in gas and oil. But here's the good news! We have a special opportunity to influence a company with \$8 trillion in managed assets.

If you are a Vanguard customer, please help us lay the groundwork for this strategy by visiting [EQAT.org](https://eqat.org) and filling out a form. We will keep you informed of opportunities to take action, which may include different efforts to pressure Vanguard, such as phone calls and letters. If we use the bargaining chip of moving our money, it will be a last resort. Collecting this information will also enable us to tell

Vanguard that we are part of a group that collectively invests a substantial dollar amount with them. I am keeper of this list, holding people's individual financial information in the highest confidence.

If you are not a Vanguard customer (or can't even imagine having such funds), there will be many other ways for you and your Quaker community to be involved! Visit [EQAT.org](https://eqat.org) for more and stay tuned for a webinar hosted by Quaker Earthcare Witness on this topic this spring.

Eileen Flanagan is the interim campaign director and former board clerk of EQAT. She is also an award-winning author who speaks and teaches online courses on effective and spiritually grounded nonviolent direct action.



## BOOK REVIEW by Ruah Swennerfelt

**D**egeneration of land, water, forests, biodiversity, and human health are causes of climate change. And climate change is yet another cause of poverty. Turning this vicious circle to a virtuous one is crucial to addressing the climate crisis.

In 1998, my husband Louis and I represented Quaker Earthcare Witness at the Sustainable Economy Conference in Havana, Cuba, where we met Paul Hawken, one of the main speakers. We've been inspired by Paul's writings and commitment to a sustainable world for many years, and I'm delighted to share about his new book, *Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation*.

*Regeneration* offers an approach to climate change that weaves equity, justice, climate, and biodiversity, instead of focusing only on energy issues. The book was written with six basic frameworks for action, and the first is equity. Paul writes, "This comes first because it encompasses everything. All that needs to be done must be infused by equity." It might be helpful for us to think of this in everyday terms as basic fairness, certainly evident in our Quaker Testimonies.

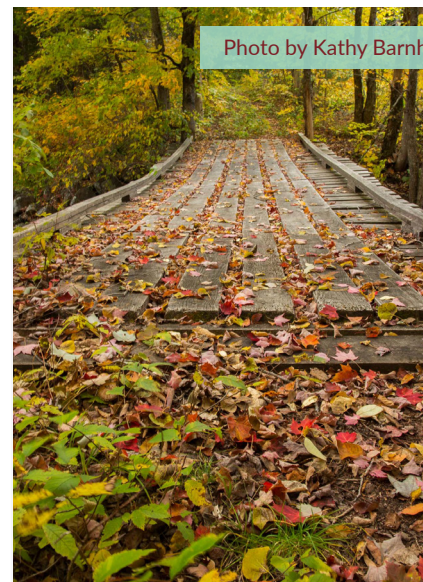
Paul writes about the amazing people and organizations who are addressing the problems. The topics illuminated by the book include oceans, forests, wilding, land, people, food, energy, industry, and more. There is something for everyone. If you live in the city, it's for you. If you live near a forest, it's for you. If you are a farmer or homesteader, it's for you. If you want hope, it's there. If you want to understand how all of life is interconnected, it's there.

There is a section on "wilding" in the book. One part of that section is about trophic cascades—how the loss of one species (called a keystone species) can have a traumatic effect on all the other species in that biosystem. We learn that, "each ecosystem is a repository of carbon stored above and below ground, systems of life that are unimagined in the full complexity."

Woven into the fabric of the book is a foreword by Jane Goodall, and many essays by authors, farmers, and Earth activists. This adds to the richness of the book. It's literary, scientific, inspiring, and informative.

Paul also suggests that we change the purpose of militaries to play a key role in securing our future, because, he says, the climate crisis threatens and undermines the security of everything. He goes on to write: "'Scientists Recommend These 4 Weapons in our War Against Climate Change' reads one headline. If we understood what we face, we would not find war a useful metaphor to describe the solution. Global warming is a massive force beyond human comprehension, but it is not the enemy."

Ruah Swennerfelt is co-clerk of Middlebury Friends Meeting in Vermont and serves on the Earthcare Committee. Before retiring, she served as General Secretary of QEW.



## Queries from QEW'S Monthly Worship Sharing

*"The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction."*  
– Rachel Carson

### Queries:

What do you do to pay attention to the wonders and realities of the universe? How does that make you feel?

How do you connect those feelings with the awareness of injustice and environmental degradation?

### Join Us

QEW hosts monthly online worship sharing groups in partnership with Friends General Conference. Visit [QuakerEarthcare.org/events](https://QuakerEarthcare.org/events).



Our recent trip to Glasgow, Scotland for the UN climate conference for 2021 (COP26) involved a lot of travel by train. We had constant reminders to “Mind the gap when alighting the carriage.” This phrase felt very much in line with the genteel friendliness of the Scottish people we met. For the nearly 40,000 of us who went to Scotland in the fall of 2021, it also seemed a symbol for closing the gap between what is being done and what still needs to be done to rein in runaway climate change.

Given the unusual nature of the past two years, many of us hoped for a political tipping point where the nations of the world would finally commit to the massive change needed to ensure our collective survival. Unfortunately, what happened fell tragically short.

Despite this, there were surprises. Perhaps the brightest of these was the unprecedented degree to which grassroots groups in the UK were remotely involved in the conference.

To understand why this is significant, consider the major groups that attend these conferences. First are the negotiators, working to craft agreements. Second are the staff who support the process. Next, there are the official observers (like us) who witness and hopefully influence the negotiations. There are also the many unofficial observers who witness and influence from outside the

conference. What was unprecedented with COP26 was the magnitude of this latter group. Unable to directly attend the conference, a broad collection of civic groups were connected virtually to the conference, often organizing their own local cultural and educational events as an extension of the official observer space. Particularly noteworthy is the role of Quakers in both the official and unofficial spaces.

Groups like Quaker Earthcare Witness, Friends World Committee on Consultation, and the Quaker United Nations Office were represented inside the conference space. Other groups (Quakers in Scotland and Quakers in Britain) were highly active supporting community climate events throughout the UK. Collectively these groups were instrumental in the following:

- » Coordinating Quaker involvement in major public demonstrations during the conference,
- » Speaking at interfaith panel events and building relationships with other faith groups,
- » Speaking at other community events,
- » Supporting side events like the People’s Summit,
- » Organizing events to advocate for Climate Justice, and
- » Organizing “quiet diplomacy” meetings with negotiators.

While COP26 began chaotically with concerns about equitable access and ended with a sense of

too little having been done to deal with serious threats to human survival, it also came with powerful examples for how civil society can be more engaged with an issue that involves all of us. As we look at the road ahead, these examples provide models of something we must do if we hope to find effective and equitable solutions to the climate crisis—engage far more of us in a critical international process. The fact that so many Quakers were involved in the engagement that made this COP distinctive raises the question of how we as Quakers in other parts of the world can build on their experience. In doing so, three key questions arise.

- » How can we educate ourselves about the international process and find ways to participate in and influence it from a distance?
- » How can we bridge the gap between our local communities and what is happening at international conferences that will shape the legacy we leave to our children and grandchildren?
- » How can we recognize local efforts that are similar to international efforts that we can build on and grow?

Frank Granshaw and Annette Carter are both members of the Multnomah Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Portland Oregon and have been observer delegates to three UN Climate Conferences (the last two as observers with QEW).

Carol Bradley

## Protecting The Last Hope Wildlife Corridor

**M**y home, the province of Nova Scotia, is the eastern part of North America, the part that sticks out into the Atlantic above Maine. The land of the Mi'kmaw, it has been colonized since 1605. First, French Acadians and then British cleared the land and cut the forests. The land was important for the British military: trees were felled to build forts, warships, and then sailing ships for trade and for fishing. In the last 40 years, forest practices have followed the industrial model: cutting young evergreen growth for pit props (mines) and papermaking, replanting fast-growing spruce trees for a thirty-year harvesting cycle to use for biomass, and spraying glyphosate to kill young broadleaf tree growth.

Since the beginning of December, folks ages 24 to 77 have been camping to stop a 24-hectare parcel of woods from being “harvested” by logging company WestFor Management’s heavy machinery, destroying the last remaining corridor for wildlife movement in the region.

On New Year’s Eve, I drove to Halifax to bring two campers, their dog, and a trunk load of dry firewood, to Last Hope Camp, located near Trout Lake in the western part of the province, where they would join the protest. Our work as campers and supporters is to convince government leadership to remove this

land from the license to log process. Home to the endangered, almost mythical, mainland moose, the critically endangered pine marten, and the wood turtle, these woods are just a blip in the industrial forestry system, yet so valuable in the greater scheme of things.

The camp was pretty comfortable on that dry and chilly December day. Two days later it poured rain and I lay in bed at home, hoping the tents had held. The campers had been



The author (third from the left) at the Last Hope Camp bringing supplies and smiles. From the campers’ Facebook page: “Business as usual is over, if we want a livable planet. That’s why we are camped out here through blizzards and frigid temperatures. To save the Last Hope Wildlife Corridor, yes, but also to say enough is enough. We must save what we can so that nature has a chance. So that humanity has a chance.”

given an old prospector’s tent with a stove. Later in the week, I went back to pick up another shift of campers and took them home to showers, television news, and mask-wearing. Then I wrote letters to politicians.

Elected officials can protect these areas, but we also need our economies to change too. The threat to forest ecosystems is happening all over the world—in Bulgaria and Romania, in Appalachia, in western Canada, in Ethiopia. “Harvesting” trees for biomass means the contractor drives a two-ton machine on heavy tracks with an extendable boom into the woods. They clear a road twenty feet wide by knocking down everything ahead of the machine. Its grinding blade with teeth on the boom chews down trees and slings the trees into a chipper. Bigger trees are taken to the mill to be chipped. Imagine when this happens during bird-nesting season. After the logs, or chips, are trucked to a processor, they are kiln-dried and packed in 40-pound bags to burn in pellet stoves. Wood biomass is not a sustainable or “green” fuel, even though it’s being marketed that way.

As I write this, it’s February and the campers are still there. They have a second prospector’s tent and have been comfortable even at 5 degrees Fahrenheit in a blizzard. They’ve been plowed out by a snowmobile and visited by Indigenous elders for a feast. I’ve continued to write letters to my representative.

Trees are most valuable growing. When will the elected folks hear? Will they act?

Carol Bradley is Canadian Yearly Meeting’s Representative to QEW and a member of Annapolis Valley meeting. To learn more, visit [Facebook.com/ExtinctionRebellionNovaScotia](https://www.facebook.com/ExtinctionRebellionNovaScotia).

**One need only look down from a plane, or check out the satellite view of any Crown land forest in Nova Scotia to see just how much clearcutting is going on. Total massacre. Logging roads growing like a cancer across the province.**

– The Stop Spraying and Clear-Cutting Mi’kma’ki (Nova Scotia Campaign)



Shelley Tanenbaum

## Quaker Earthcare Witness News & Updates

Quaker Earthcare Witness' primary goal is to nurture a spiritual transformation in our relationship with the living world. Our efforts include projects, events, and other resources, all aimed at reaching a wider circle of Friends and like-minded individuals and organizations.

Over the past two pandemic years, we have grown in numbers via our online events. This January/February we launched a three-part book discussion with Mary Conrow Coelho on her book, *The Depths of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics and Healing*. It was well-attended, including longtime QEW supporters and new Friends. We expect to continue hosting monthly online events. In March, Lindsey Cook from the Quaker United Nations Office (see page 5) and Kallan Benson from Annapolis Meeting and Fridays for Future will meet with us to share their impressions of COP26 in Glasgow and their plans for climate activism this year. Lindsey will speak from the perspective of international climate diplomacy and Kallan will speak as a youth activist.

We are also collaborating with Philadelphia-based Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT) on their campaign to confront the investment firm Vanguard about their support for fossil fuel companies (see Eileen Flanagan's and Jonathan Ogle's articles on page 8 & 9). This spring, Eileen will join us for our monthly webinar to explain the campaign, and we will continue to encourage our network to participate throughout this year.

We are continuing to sponsor monthly worship sharing. Friends greatly appreciate this opportunity to reflect on our relationship with the living world. You can sign up and encourage others to sign up to attend these sessions at [QuakerEarthcare.org](https://QuakerEarthcare.org).

QEW Presents! had several opportunities to meet with monthly meetings recently. QEW Presents! is a group of 14 speakers who are available to visit your meeting and give presentations and workshops on a variety of topics. In February, Jim Kessler joined Portland, OR Friends at Bridge City Meeting to talk about native landscaping. Mary Ann Percy met with Hawaii Friends to practice spiritual discernment in nature. Take a look at our list of speakers at [QuakerEarthcare.org/workshops](https://QuakerEarthcare.org/workshops) and ask your Meeting to invite one of our presenters to share.

Through these efforts, we have plans to reach beyond our existing circle while also sustaining this beloved community.

Shelley Tanenbaum is QEW's General Secretary and a member of Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting in Berkeley, CA.

### Minute of Appreciation Approved by QEW's Steering Committee

### Thank You, Mary Jo, For Your Service as QEW Clerk!

"Quaker Earthcare Witness expresses deep gratitude for the service of Mary Jo Klingel as clerk.

Her period of service has been fraught by what one Friend has named the six pandemics that are causing disease and death worldwide: COVID-19, prejudice, violence, climate change, economic inequity, and misinformation.

In addition to being the mother\* of the South-eastern Yearly Meeting's Field Secretary for Earthcare staff position, Mary Jo Klingel's love, care, and steadfastness during these crises have not only kept Quaker Earthcare Witness 'in good order,' but helped it to grow in body, in spirit, and financially.

Quaker Earthcare Witness thanks you for your service leadership and welcomes you to Mentoring Clerkship."

\*Mary Jo helped create this position.



Mary Jo (left), Nancy Newman, Shelley Tanenbaum, and Richard Fuller, at our Steering Committee Meeting with Twin City Friends, April 2019.

### Come to our Spring Steering Committee Meeting

QEW gathers twice a year to conduct business and enjoy fellowship with each other. Our spring 2022 meeting will be held online April 7 - 10. We welcome visitors for any or all of our sessions.

### Donate to QEW

We ask Friends to donate \$40 annually to support this *BeFriending Creation* newsletter.

You can donate at [QuakerEarthcare.org/donate](https://QuakerEarthcare.org/donate) or send a check to: Quaker Earthcare Witness, P.O. Box 6787, Albany, CA 94706. Thanks!



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## Apply for a Quaker Earthcare Witness Mini-Grant

**Q**uaker Earthcare Witness organizes a mini-grant program which gives \$500 matching grants to help Friends complete eco-friendly projects. Our goal is to encourage and support Friends groups, meetings, churches, and organizations that are looking for ways to enhance their practical and spiritual relationship with Earth.

Past grant recipients have used QEW mini-grant funds for a range of projects, like creating an edible garden for their meeting, adding a composter for a Friends' school, and completing a solar energy project.

Does your community have a project in mind for 2022? We are looking for projects to support! We especially encourage projects that directly address environmental justice, climate change, and/or those that will involve young people.

In 2021, we supported projects like:

- » Building raised beds for community food sharing through Project Abundance at Ithaca Monthly Meeting (New York).

**Quaker Earthcare Witness offers  
\$500 matching grants to help Friends  
complete eco-friendly projects.**



- » Expanding the Keller St. Community Garden at State College Monthly Meeting (Pennsylvania).
- » Acquiring the "Exploring Organisms with Literacy" set for 1st graders at West Chester Friends School (Pennsylvania).
- » Partially funding the Chu Memorial & Meditation Garden using native landscaping at New London Friends Meeting (Connecticut).

Visit [QuakerEarthcare.org/mini-grants](https://www.QuakerEarthcare.org/mini-grants) for more.