



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness

Affirming our essential unity with nature

Volume 27, Number 5 • September-October 2014

QEW at the People's Climate March

This special issue of BeFriending Creation includes reflections from QEW Friends who traveled to New York City for the history-making People's Climate March on September 21, 2014. Enjoy!



When Does a march become a March?

By Roy Taylor, QEW Clerk

When does a march become a March? Was it six months ago, when the idea for the People's Climate March was hatched and the first hundred groups coalesced to bring it forward to the world? That was when QEW got on board as a sponsoring organization. By September 21st we were one of more than 1,500 participating organizations. We can take pride in knowing that we were an early adopter in this effort.

As the organizing moved forward, we found the opportunity to align ourselves with other faith-based groups. Your General Secretary (Shelley Tanenbaum) and I, as Clerk, spent hours each week participating in conference calls and sending email messages, coordinating between the People's Climate March, Green Faith (the interfaith group coordinator), and the growing Friend's contingent, which involved QEW, FCNL, QUNO, EQAT, 15th Street Meeting (NYC), and NYYM.

Friend's organizations were working together as I had never seen before. A joint statement was discerned and approved. That statement has continued to gather approvals since it was originally distributed. We've posted the statement on the QEW website at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/facing-challenge-climate-change-shared-statement-quaker-groups>.

On September 21, the day of the March, Jack Bradin was the first QEW Friend to arrive at the assembling point on 58th Street. The interfaith contingent was expected to be so large we were provided with our own staging area outside the main line-up area of the general March. Mary Gilbert assisted by volunteering as a greeter to those entering the area. Our large QEW banner marked our spot, making it easier for folks to find us. A steady stream of Friends joined us throughout the morning. The space was filled with greetings and joyful reunions and connections.

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BeFriending Creation

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We publish *BeFriending Creation* to promote the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness, stimulate discussion and action, share insights, practical ideas, and news of our actions, and encourage among Friends 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 (Quakers). The editor is responsible for unsigned items. Submission deadlines are typically February 10, April 10, June 10, August 10, October 10, and December 10.

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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.

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Earthcare Calendar

November 5, 2014 (extended).

Deadline for article submissions for November-December 2014 *BeFriending Creation*.

Letters to Share

"WHAT CANST THOU SAY" ABOUT SPIRIT-LED EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF EARTH, about your own stirrings toward care for the planet, in relation to the vision and thoughtful action of Quaker Earthcare Witness as a whole? We'd like to hear from you. Send your letters to Katherine at katherine@quakerearthcare.org, and share your thoughts and leadings with Friends and caring others throughout North America.

Dear Friends,

A carbon tax—widely thought to be the most rational and effective means to reduce fossil fuel and other carbon usage—is not on our government's current agenda. We can, however, voluntarily tax ourselves and devote the taxes we raise to organizations or projects working to reduce carbon usage and in other ways to heal the environment.

As we described in the September-October 2013 issue of *BeFriending Creation*, seven of us in the Mount Toby MA meeting began a Voluntary Carbon Tax Witness a year and a half ago. Our Mount Toby group has now grown to 16 and the idea has been taken up not only by other Quaker meetings but also by other faith groups here in Western Massachusetts. Interest has been expressed also by individuals and other groups.

This interest led us to create a website, <http://voluntarycarbontax.org>, which promotes the idea but is stripped of explicitly Quaker language. We know that when people act together, they gain strength from one another. Our website is set up to encourage voluntary carbon tax groups to join together so we can know of one another, gain strength from cooperation, publicize results and motivate others to join in the movement.

In the first 15 months of our witness, more than \$3,500 has been reported. Please visit our website, <http://voluntarycarbontax.org>, to see where the money has been sent, find out how to register as an individual or as a group, and learn more about this effort. And please share this information with anyone you know who is interested in climate issues.

Roger Conant

Mount Toby Friends Meeting ☞

Please Consider a Gift to QEW!

The end of the year is fast approaching, Friends. Please consider a generous gift to QEW so we can continue our good, Spirit-led work for the planet and continue offering our publications free of charge!



It's Easy! You can now donate online by going to www.quakerearthcare.org and clicking the **Donate** button. Thanks, Friends!



March, from page 1

Several worship sessions were held during our time together. QEW, under Shelley's leadership, lead an early worship session and EQAT held another later. Grace surrounded us during our quiet time sitting on the street within a sea of cacophony.

The People's Climate March started just a few minutes after the appointed time of 11:30 am. It was nearly 2:00 pm before we actually started to move out and around the block to join the main stream at Columbus Circle. Friends moved at a varying pace that seemed to disperse us and then bring us back together along the route. We took turns holding our banner above the heads of the people.

Being part of this enormous crowd was an amazing experience. Different groups and individuals came for their own reasons, but everyone marched with the shared understanding that climate change needs to be stopped. The turnout was so successful that when the first marchers reached the end of the route, organizers realized they needed to disperse the marchers as they finished to make room for those still marching. We were encouraged to take down our sign and move out of the way so the large number of marchers behind us could complete the March.

As an epilogue to the March, a multi-faith service was held at St John the Divine and we hustled off after completing to get there on time. Reverberating refrains by Paul Winter welcomed us in the amazing space within the stones, stacked to create the soaring interior.

The service included a welcome greeting, a review, and an array of faith-based reasons for caring for this gift that we have been given as creation. Commitments of care were given and affirmed throughout the service.



Paul Winter at St. John the Divine following the March.

By the time we left, many of us who had entered tired from the march were energized and ready to continue on to our respective resting spots for the evening and beyond. Activities continued on Monday and as I write this article on Tuesday morning, people are greatly anticipating the UN Climate Summit, which begins later today.

Even as these events in New York draw to a close, the March is not over. The People's Climate March on September 21 provided a gathering point, an opportunity for many organizations to connect and begin working together. We will continue this important, collaborative effort in Lima later this year and then go on to Paris, near the end of 2015. March on! ♾

Melting the Ice in Our Hearts

by Shelley Tanenbaum

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 slightly paraphrased statement from Angaangaq Angakkorsuaq, an indigenous leader from Greenland, one of the many inspiring speakers at the Religions of the World forum that was held at Union Theological Seminary as a lead up to "climate week" in New York City. I was honored to represent Quaker Earthcare Witness at the forum along with 250 faith leaders from all over the world. The forum included presentations, prayers, workshops and rituals on Friday and Saturday, time for the People's Climate March on Sunday, and an interfaith service at St. John the Divine Cathedral on Sunday evening.



*General Secretaries
past and present:
Ruah Swennerfelt
and Shelley
Tanenbaum.*

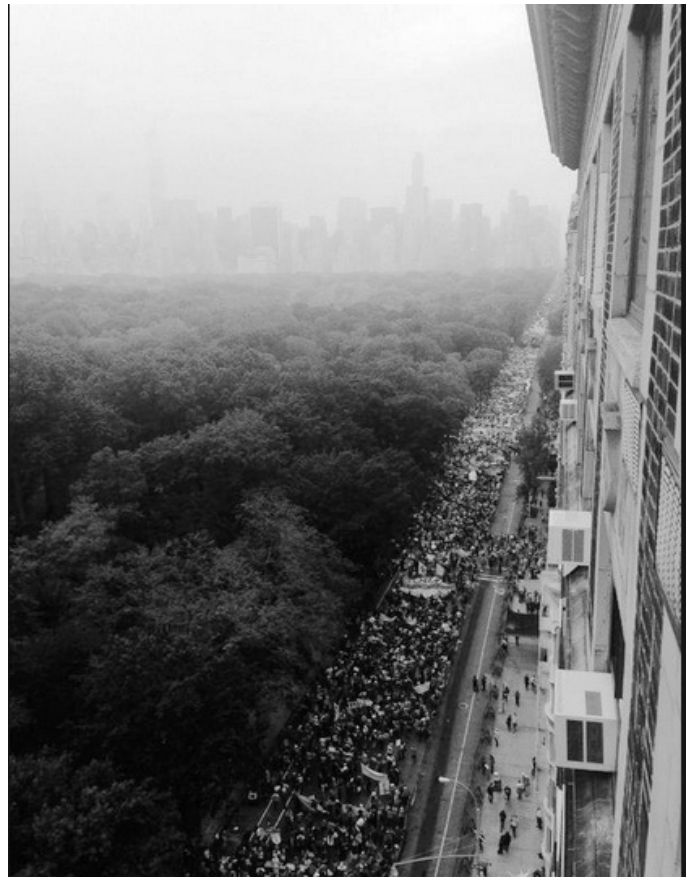


See **Ice**, next page

Here is a sampling of some of what we heard and experienced :

- “May this be the season when we all wake up”
Rabbi Ellen Bernstein
- “The earth is our relative, not a resource.”
- “(Science, economics, etc.) has not changed the dangerous direction we are on, so we pray... we pray for (repentance, convergence, courage, each other) to turn around and walk in another direction.” Jim Wallis
- “Climate change is the greatest environmental justice issue of all times— for today, and for future generations.” And “Optimism is the only option.” Thomas Lovejoy
- “This is a moment of change.” Mary Evelyn Tucker
- “If we had waited for guidance from the traditional church 30 years ago, we would not have started Genesis Farms. Our guidance came from the land.” Sister Miriam MacGillis
- “We need to be subjects of rights, not objects of rights.” And “The indigenous people of the world did not cause this problem, but we are part of the solution.” Ana Francisca Perez, Mayan leader
- “We must rekindle the moral voice in the halls of Congress.” Jose Aguto, FCNL
- “Climate change is not an environmental issue; it is a social issue.” Larry Schweiger, National Wildlife Federation
- “The logic of domination in slavery is the same logic used to dominate the environment.” And “We must link social justice and earth justice that we all might be free.” As well as “Faith gives us optimism.” Melanie Harris
- And one person quoted Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the UN framework on climate change: “I can’t believe the faith community is so asleep at the wheel.”
- “To respect and forgive are the first medicines.” Chief Looking Horse
- “You cannot defeat darkness with anything but love.” Koran
- “We cannot reach peace and justice without the faith traditions of each other. Miracles are happening—let us continue to draw strength from each other.”

A few concrete ideas came out of the forum, and I’m sure many more will follow in the months ahead. The Our Voices campaign has been launched (<http://ourvoices.net>) with three projects: (1) a massive online petition to demonstrate peoples’ support for action on climate change, much as the March was meant to show



The People’s Climate March extended as far as the eye could see: 400,000 strong.

a huge outpouring of public support; (2) an area for collecting and telling stories about the faith communities’ commitment and action on climate change; and (3) a project for publicly voicing our concerns and globally synchronizing actions (such as ringing bells, clanging gongs, etc.).

The religious community that was represented at the forum was clearly supportive of climate action now and one of the exciting aspects of the forum was linking religious leaders with scientists. Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, chair of the IPCC, pleaded with religious leaders to incorporate climate change action in all that we do within our communities. He knows as well as anyone that scientists have been reporting on the significance of climate change for many, many years with very little action at the international level. The religious community has the ability to reach our hearts.

The forum concluded with a sense-of-the-meeting poem composed in-the-moment by Terry Tempest Williams, who created her poem using comments she heard in the final session. She said: “May we stand in the center of this crisis with love.” ♡



Four Snapshots from the March

By Mary Gilbert

Snapshot 1: Patti Muldoon and I are kneeling on the floor working on a blue cloth rectangle, painting in the letters on the banner we designed: “QUAKER WITNESS.” It should be useful for many events, not just the People’s Climate March. The paint is three-dimensional, “pearl” in color, and really gleams. It’s hard to manage, like icing that’s too watery to spread on a cake, so you get two low ridges with the cake showing through. We carry on courageously.

Snapshot 2: I’m tired from being a greeter (“Hello. Can I help you find your faith group?”) and am upstairs taking a break in a mall between 58th and 59th Streets. A window wall looks down on Columbus Circle. The faith group block won’t be moving for over an hour, but the March has begun! Fat feeder lines are coming into the Circle, filling the streets. It looks like a huge anaconda coiling sinuously around the Circle and oozing along Central Park South.

Snapshot 3: The 10,000 of us who filled the assigned block for faith groups have finally started to move. I catch up to walk with people from QEW and

with those from my Monthly and Yearly Meetings. The different faith groups are all mixed up together because some are walking faster than others. There is a message there: *We really are one group. We may use different words but we are actually in unity on this March.*

Snapshot 4: In the evening my NYC hostess and I check a city channel for news coverage. They show one quick shot of our parade; then one shot of a NY State dignitary ending a speech. Standing next to him was Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations, who walked with us. The reporter did not identify Mr. Ban. In the rest of the video we see the reporter standing on 11th Avenue, which runs through an industrial area near the Hudson River. Behind him a few people are wandering around and the “takedown” of various booths is going on. He says the marchers “filled 11th Avenue.”

There was no estimate of our numbers or comment on how long it took the March to pass any particular spot. The station had apparently chosen to minimize the event. Infuriating! The next morning the *New York Times* gave a much more accurate report. But *REALLY!*

The March is over. Now we begin the real work. ☞



Patti Muldoon holding up the Quaker Witness banner she and Mary made for the march. Taken by Skip Schiel, member of FMC.

After the People’s Climate March, What?

by David Millar

Art thou a child of the Light, and hast thou walked in the Light? What canst thou say? Margaret Fell

In addition to the People’s Climate March in New York, I attended the People’s Climate Summit, offering “new economy” alternatives to the official UN Summit plan to finance climate action and SDGs by carbon offsets as well as Climate Convergence workshops.

In North America, the rainbow of indigenes, people of color, and the poor are often on the front lines, dealing with effects of climate change. But the destruction of God’s Creation and rampant speculation at the expense of Earth commons will affect all future generations. As the Kabarak Call says, “We waste our children’s heritage.” In light of an issue of this magnitude, the key question is not, “*How good do we feel about joining the March?*” It is, “*What do we do now?*”

This does not mean giving up your spirituality and your present leadings. Every little bit counts and all your efforts can add up to significant changes in your approach and the way in which you model choices for others. Efforts might include working toward personal transformation, changing habits of consumption,

See *After*, next page

offering prayer, providing support for members of your Meeting, participating in multi-faith groups and listening projects, and getting involved with transition networks. You may feel your bucket is already full. But as UCC leader Rev. Jim Antal reminded us at a post-March Vermont IPL conference, eco-justice is now the “bucket” that unites all our concerns.

As we learn about Quaker positions on many issues, we find ourselves on parallel and often shared paths with other Friends organizations. We have common values and concerns. Some Friends groups (such Britain Yearly Meeting, AFSC, and FCNL) may have more experience in public organizing and advocacy than we do at QEW, but all groups are needed. We can learn from each other.



Photo credit: Robert van Waarden

with the Environmental Justice movement. QEW can catch up; to do so, we must open up.

I [was] brought up into the covenant, as sanctified by the Word which was in the beginning, by which all things are upheld; wherein is unity with the creation.
George Fox's Journal ❧



Marchers Ta'kaiya Blaney (Sliammon) and Kandi Mossett (Mandan, Hidatsa).

Quakers in Africa are far ahead of us in developing processes for peacemaking, truth, and reconciliation and in (re)building the beloved community. Here in North America, we can also learn from aboriginal wisdom about Creation, as well as from the 50 years of civil action by African American churches involved

For More Information

- I reported on the UN Summit and the Climate Convergence workshop by email to the QEWdiscussions list. You can also read reports on the New Jubilee (<http://tinyurl.com/qzv7hbm>) and New Economy conferences (<http://tinyurl.com/pawym2m>).
- To view an album of photos showing Quakers at the People's Climate March, visit: <http://flickr.com/fdmillar/sets>.
- You can read the Kaborak Call to Peace and Ecojustice, approved by World Conference of Friends in 2012, at <http://mecteam.blogspot.com/2012/04/kaborak-call-for-peace-and-ecojustice.html>.
- To read my article in BeFriending Creation (January 2013) on keeping and following your leadings, visit <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/story/dont-give-your-leading>.



A Report from UNFCCC Negotiations

By Lindsey Fielder Cook. QUNO Representative

On June 4-15, 2014, international climate change negotiations were held in Bonn, Germany under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). These “inter-sessional” negotiations were preparation for the annual UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP). The next COP will be in Lima, Peru, December 1-12, a meeting which is referred to as the COP 20.

Background to the UNFCCC Negotiations

The UNFCCC climate change negotiations began with the adoption of the Convention in 1992 and include the protocol to the UNFCCC, known as the Kyoto Protocol (KP). The KP was adopted in 1997, brought into force in 2005, and commits industrialized countries (and some transitioning into a market economy) to Green House Gas (GHG) emission reduction targets. Delegations are currently negotiating elements for a new, legally binding agreement for all parties, to be approved at the COP in 2015.

As a multilateral effort, the structure of the UNFCCC negotiations enables the poorest to richest have a voice in the negotiations. For the poorest and those most vulnerable to the current rise in global temperatures, these negotiations are about survival. To emerging and developed economies, these negotiations are more often about maintaining or developing economic competitiveness in a changing economic landscape. For our young and future generations, these negotiations are about whether they can thrive as we have on this extraordinary planet.

The Challenges

The international climate change negotiations continue to encounter, at varying levels, deep mistrust and disappointment, often split along “developing” and “developed” countries, whose status according to these negotiations was defined in the Annexes in the KP.

Developing countries, known as *non-Annex 1 parties*, express deep concern that developed countries have not taken a sufficient lead or fulfilled commitments in GHG emission mitigation, climate financing, capacity building, and technology transfer. According to the UNFCCC, overall emissions in 2012 by Annex B parties to the KP with commitments to the first commitment period were 22.6 percent below the 1990 base levels, although this is not representative of all industrialized countries and is also less than the proposed 25-40 percent target. The United States has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and Canada pulled out in 2011. KP parties such as Australia and Japan have pulled back on their commitments, and too few developed countries have signed up to a second commitment period. There is deep disappointment and anger over limited support to adaptation, including low levels of delivered climate finance which is key both to building trust and the ability of poor countries to increase mitigation.

Developed country signatories to the KP often express frustration over low recognition for achievements reached (some countries are far more active than others). The GHG emission landscape has shifted since countries were categorized under the KP in 1997. The most rapid increase in GHG emissions is now coming from developing countries.

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Specifics of the June Negotiations

The June negotiations focused on three areas of negotiation, specifically the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), and the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP). These first two negotiation foci, the SBI/SBSTA, focus on how to implement already agreed decisions. The third, the ADP, is separated between “workstream 1”, which aims to create a new, legally binding agreement for all parties by the COP 21 in Paris for implementation in 2020, and “workstream 2”, which aims to strengthen pre-2020 commitments of developed country signatories to the Kyoto Protocol, referred to as *Annex 1 parties*.

What Happened?

Although there were no major advances in June, the negotiations ended with a relatively positive atmosphere. This cannot be said of the June 2013 inter-sessionals, where the SBI was blocked for negotiation on procedural reasons; the COP 19 in Warsaw, during which development and environmental NGOs protested with a walk-out; or the March 2014 ADP session, which was tense on procedural matters. And the June 2014 negotiations actually had a rough beginning, as the opening High Level Ministerial Roundtable had a low attendance (only 1/3 of expected Ministers participated).

What felt more positive? The negotiations opened with the two top emitters offering significant, though by no means sufficient, mitigation action, intended by China, and through law by the US. Mexico set a high standard with its commitment to source 30 percent of its energy through renewable energies (REs) by 2018. In the ADP sessions, negotiators moved on from disagreements over procedure and into substance over elements to include in the drafting the new agreement. The SBI/SBSTA sessions went slowly and steadily, but without apparent achievements in overcoming the issues with the greatest tension.

What was most different, as least to this observer, was the negotiators’ engagement with climate science and with civil society. Over the last months, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has released all three working group reports of its 5th Assessment Report (AR5). The scientific message is clear: we are on track (what is called “business as usual”, or RCP 8.5) for an increase of global mean temperatures of up to 4.8° C by 2081, which poses a dramatic risk to humanity (summary below). The IPCC held a number of intense “expert meetings” which were powerful

and increasingly attended by negotiators as the days passed. The urgency of the science is at odds with the lack of urgency overall in the negotiation process to commit to GHG mitigation levels necessary to keep global temperature below 2°C (or 1.5°C, which remains feasible with radical action) above pre-industrial levels. The knowledge and pathways exist, but political will to move beyond short-term economic priorities appears low.

There were three sessions on civil society engagement under Article 6 of the Convention (which focuses on education, training and public awareness). Organisations from around the world described their engagement with civil society; these presentations, overall, brought the human face to a negotiations process that many find dehumanizing. One particularly moving presentation was from the Mary Robinson Foundation, describing their experience inviting policy makers to listen to civil society, rather than the other way round.

In the SBI and SBSTA, strong concern was expressed over the creation of a new market mechanism which attaches a kind of “price tag” to nature rather than approaching mitigation through non-market mechanisms. However, many countries view non-market mechanisms, or regulation efforts, as national priorities that do not belong in international negotiations.

Agriculture represents 20-24 percent of GHG emissions. CO₂ emissions are decreasing in this sector, in part due to increases in forestation, though other GHG gases such as methane are increasing (increased meat consumption). Agriculture is discussed in the SBSTA but receives limited attention considering its GHG emissions; there is increasing talk of “climate smart agriculture” but little clarity on what this actually entails. QUNO and many NGOs highlight the critical role played by small-scale farming, which has high adaptation potential, and crop diversity as critical for food security.

Climate finance remains of great concern, with the relatively new Green Climate Fund (GCF) lacking capitalization and other climate funds seriously under-capitalized. There is no agreed definition of “climate finance”, which also causes great tension, as some countries speak of pledges that others do not recognize as real funding. This included serious concern over the dependence on private-over-public-sector funded finance.

The main focus of the June negotiations was on the ADP, primarily because at core it relates to mitigation, pre 2020 (developed countries) and post 2020 (the new agreement for 2015). For the latter, the discussions centered on the definition of “intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs)”, a phrase accepted in the last late hours of the COP 19 as an approach to closing the vast gap between pledged and needed GHG

emissions to hold global temperatures to 2°C (or 1.5°, as is still possible). Many questions remain:

- Will the INDCs be legally binding for all countries?
- Will countries remain categorized alongside KP Annexes?
- To what extent will contributions balance mitigation with adaptation commitments? and
- Will the new agreement build rules and parameters (common metrics, etc.) to enable clarity and comparison of the various national commitments, or will INDCs at worst become a *pick what you want* scenario?
- Will the new agreement be fair, close the emissions gap, and protect the poorest?

The INDCs must be defined as soon as possible, to enable Parties (countries) to make commitments by March 2015 with enough time before the COP in Paris to evaluate whether these pledges will close the emissions gap. In view of the past and current economic and emissions landscape, negotiators must find a way forward to uphold past, present, and future responsibilities and to bring all countries to consensus.

QUNO

QUNO began observing the UNFCCC through the support of QEW. Since June 2013, we have been offering quiet diplomacy to a diverse group of UNFCCC negotiators, with the aim to help build communication and understanding in support of a fair and sufficient agreement. The quiet diplomacy dinners have experienced increasing attendance, and we are told that the human connection of these dinners, and the safe space to talk off the record, is valuable.

In Conclusion

The UNFCCC climate negotiations have received much criticism. Yet anthropogenic (due to human activities) climate change is a global challenge requiring

global action, and the UNFCCC continues to offer the one multilateral effort where poor and rich countries can seek a global way forward. Alternatives include bilateral approaches, often between the most powerful countries, which leave out the voice of the poorest and most vulnerable countries as well as civil society observers who provide a witness to calls for fair and sufficient action. What might an effective multilateral effort look like? Climate Action Network states that this would include high levels of mitigation, commitment to a just transition toward 100 percent renewables in the phase out of fossil fuels, sufficient financing of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) from the wealthiest countries and commitments for long-term financing, phasing out of coal, and recognition that climate change is a great contributor to global poverty.

Grassroots action is key to convincing our governments that we want to face and embrace this challenge to live sustainably and justly on this earth.

Annex: *the IPCC Report*

The 5th Assessment Report (AR5, available at www.ipcc.ch) states, in sum, that our climate is warming at an unprecedented rate. Human activity (anthropogenic) has caused most of the warming since 1951, and the earth's surface already warmed .85°C between 1880 and 2012. It remains technologically and economically feasible to limit global warming to 1.5°C with extraordinary but possible actions; however, GHG emissions are rising more quickly than ever before since 2010 and this “business as usual” will likely result in a mean global temperature increase by 2081 of 2.6°C to 4.8°C as compared to 1986-2005 temperatures. This would create catastrophic climate change, challenging the ability of current and future generations to thrive on this planet. (Please note that the sea level rise predictions in the AR5 were made prior to the revelation of the extent of melting of the West Antarctic ice sheet.)

Lindsey Cook

July 2014

QUNO ☞



Kayak, continued from page 12

Here are some interesting features about Alaska that I learned on this visit:

- Climate change is already changing the way people live in Alaska—from the different patterns and greater numbers of forest fires, to changing populations of plants and animals on which native subsistence life depend.
- The trees are short in central Alaska due to harsh winters, poor soil, and permafrost.
- 80 percent of the state is covered with permafrost; on average, it is found 4 feet from the soil surface.
- Alaska recycles. Apparently, every retired school bus has found its way to Denali National Park and Preserve. These buses are used to ferry tourists through the park, so the bears, moose, Dall sheep, and caribou can roam freely.
- Alaskans have a strong sense of the commons expressed in a shared use of natural resources. Each resident is allowed to take 10-25 salmon per year (actual limits vary depending on the species and the watershed) and many, many people were out fishing while I was there, which coincided with the Coho salmon (silvers) run. As with the salmon, folks were out picking wild berries, which were just coming into season, and storing them for the year. Oil (petroleum) is seen as a community resource, and part of the royalties paid to the state are used to create the public Alaska Permanent Fund, meant to be shared by all. How best to share this fund is a continuing source of controversy.
- People understand the annual cycle of nature and work within this cycle, engaging in fishing, hunting, summer gardening, and berry picking. They also love winter sports, no matter the temperature.
- Alaska is large, equal to 20 percent of the land mass of the lower 48 states. If the population density of Alaska was applied to the footprint of New York City, there would be 380 people in all five boroughs.
- 350 bears live in Denali National Park and Preserve; 350 bears live in the greater

Anchorage area.

- Mt. Denali remained elusive—no sightings for me. Finding the mountain was not what this trip was about; rather, it was about the journey along the road. At Denali, I rode in an old school bus “cage” for hours, looking at the bears, moose, caribou, and Dall sheep that roamed freely in their natural habitat. They came to us on their own terms: as long as we remained quiet and stayed in the bus, we were able to co-exist. The park is designed to provide access to people and provide space for the animals. My wildlife count after two days: 2 trumpeter swans (on the way in), 4 moose, 14 bears, at least 100 caribou, 8 ptarmigans, 20 Dall sheep, and 1 golden eagle. Later in the trip, in southeastern coastal Alaska, we also saw several pods of orcas and a few bald eagles.
- Indigenous people make up 15 percent of the population and have never lived on reservations. Western contact created great hardships, but, following the Alaska Native Lands Settlement Act of 1971, native Alaskans formed corporations, with many families still practicing a subsistence lifestyle, including hunting, fishing, and whaling.



Yearly Meeting Program...look familiar?

Fifteen years ago, Alaskan Friends sponsored the Compassionate Listening Project, focused on the controversial issue of subsistence. On one side were rural Alaskans, many of whom were Native, who relied on subsistence fishing and hunting not just for food but for their culture and way of life. On the other side were urban and small-town Alaskans who wanted equal access to fish and game, and who themselves may have had rich fishing and hunting traditions. The Project led to greater understanding and respect among the participants. During the 2014 Alaska Friends Conference, we reviewed how this project was conducted and considered whether a similar project could be launched now with a focus on the impacts of climate change and living sustainably. Friends are working with the concept and will re-gather at a fall called-session to decide on their next steps.

One unique aspect to life in Alaska is that each resident receives a dividend from the production of oil and gas in the state. Each year, the State of Alaska contributes a percentage of its oil royalties to the Alaska Permanent Fund, now valued at \$51.6 billion. Earnings from the fund are meant to help fund the state government as oil and gas production declines (some estimates say that North Slope oil and gas production will be depleted within 30 years). In addition, each resident receives a yearly dividend from the fund (a Permanent Fund Dividend, or PFD). Last year the dividend was around \$900 per person, although it is

estimated that in 2014, the amount may double. I challenged Alaska Friends who are able to consider donating their dividend to support alternative energy or other climate change activism. One Friend offered her dividend to support those in need and within closer range to attend the People's Climate March in New York City, and QEW distributed these funds accordingly.

There is a statewide controversy over how much to "tax" oil and gas production. A measure to increase taxation was defeated in mid-August, with the "No" advocates (supporting a lower rate of royalties) outspending the "Yes" advocates by more than 20 to 1.

For a picture album from the 2014 Alaska Friends Conference, see the online version of this September-October 2014 issue of *Befriending Creation*.

We will keep you posted on the next steps for Alaska Friends Conference. ♡

Visit the QEW Website

www.quakerearthcare.org

To see additional pictures from the People's Climate March, Shelley's trip to Alaska, and more Friendly events.



YES, I'd like to show my support for QEW!

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____

State/Province _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____

I want to contribute \$100____; \$200____; \$500____; Other _____

My check/cheque is enclosed. Payable to QEW, P.O. Box 6787, Albany, CA, 94706

____ I'd prefer to pay by my credit card: MC____; Visa ____; Amount _____

Name on Card: _____ Security Code _____

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: _____

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Thank you, Friends!

BeFriending Creation September–October 2014

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You Can't Have Your Kayak and Heat It, Too!

by Shelley Tanenbaum
General Secretary

Alaska Friends have a deep connection to their land, as I learned on a recent visit when I facilitated a day-long workshop on earthcare, climate change, and witness in the world. The title of this article was the theme for their annual gathering. For three days we explored how we can transform our lives and our world to create a livable planet in the years to come. With the extreme weather they experience regularly, the disproportionate impact of climate change in the Arctic and subarctic, and an economy that is heavily dependent on the oil and gas industry, Alaskan Friends are already facing the impacts of global climate disruption and are ready to discern what we can and ought to do about it.

More than many of us, most Alaskans understand that we are a part of the natural world. Our way of life must adapt to the vicissitudes of nature, not the other way around. Most non-native Alaskans moved to Alaska or stayed on because they value the natural resources and creative ways that people have traditionally lived in this beautiful and challenging environment.



Dickerson Friends Center, near Wasila, AK.

Please hold them in the light over the next two months as they struggle to find way forward on their path. By choosing to take action, Alaska presents both an opportunity for Friends to address climate disruption as it directly impacts our way of life, and an expression of Alaskans' deep love for the natural world.

I learned so much about Alaska, Alaskans, and the Friends of the Alaska Friends Conference. I hope they gained as much from my workshop as I have gained in insight and inspiration during my time with them.

*See **Kayak**, page 10*