



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness
Affirming our essential unity with nature

Volume 30, Number 1 • January-February 2017

A Call for More Radical Witness

By Tom Small

“THERE’S A CALL, from both within and beyond FCUN, for a more radical witness.” That’s the first sentence of an article I wrote twenty years ago for *BeFriending Creation*. What was true for the Friends Committee on Unity with Nature in 1996 holds true again for the same organization, now Quaker Earthcare Witness.

My article, “The Forest Primeval,” focused on the largest mass civil disobedience in Canadian history, at Clayoquot Sound in 1993. Almost 900 demonstrators, many of them Quakers, were arrested and charged with criminal contempt of court, for blocking logging roads to prevent clear-cutting of ancient rainforest on Vancouver Island, in British Columbia.

In the article I raised two questions: what was accomplished by that massive environmental witness? and what lessons did it offer to us in FCUN (QEW)?

In 1996, the answer to the first question was not encouraging; clear-cutting, in Clayoquot and elsewhere, proceeded apace. But what Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., called the “spectacle” and “drama” of the “peace camps” (TRIALS, p. viii) set in motion something of great power that included the First Nations for whom the forest is sacred and their home—something that requires a different response in 2016. Therein lies the message for us.

Carol MacIsaac, a Quaker music teacher, in her eloquent pre-sentencing statement to the court, affirmed, “I simply know that I did what I had to do. I have felt blessed ever since. I believe that the truth sets us free... We have touched the world” (p. 156).

Now, in these past few months, we have witnessed another powerful spectacle that gained international



Standing Rock encampment, November 2016. Photo: Shelley Tanenbaum

attention. The drama of the camps and confrontations at Standing Rock Reservation has again “touched the world.” Despite a temporary, fragile victory in December for the water protectors, the ultimate outcome remains uncertain. But the longer-term lesson of Clayoquot and the Great Bear Rainforest between Vancouver Island and the Alaskan panhandle is hopeful.

In 2000, Clayoquot Sound became British Columbia’s first UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. In 2013, the Tla-o-qui-aht (Clayoquot) First Nations declared two more sections of their ancestral lands to be “tribal parks,” thus placing the southern third of the Clayoquot watershed under their protection. The 265,000 hectares of Clayoquot rainforest remain largely intact, unlike the remainder of Vancouver Island, which is more than 75% logged.

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BeFriending Creation

BeFriending Creation, Vol. 30, No. 1, January-February 2017. Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness. ISSN 1050-0332. Published bi-monthly.

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 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 eco- logical integrity.

WE PROMOTE these truths by being patterns and examples, by communi- cating our message, and by providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relation- ship to the earth.

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Earthcare Calendar

February 10, 2016. Deadline for article submissions for March-April 2017 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 Hayley at hayley@quakerearthcare.org, and share your thoughts and leadings with Friends and caring others throughout North America. ✍

Dear Quaker Earthcare Witness,

I see that the Indian Affairs minute from New York Yearly meeting is attached [in the November-December edition of BeFriending Creation]. There are many things I like about this minute, but when I brought it to my meeting in Seattle it was pointed out to me that the minute neglects to acknowledge some of the darker moments in Quaker history in dealing with native peoples, for example the Quaker Boarding schools. Please see attached link: www.boulderfriendsmeeting.org/ipc-boarding-school-research.

I don't bring this up to put Quakers down, but to humble ourselves in all situations and be mindful that we do not always get it right despite our best efforts. The minute from NY Yearly meeting seems very unbalanced in its description of Quaker history with natives peoples and a more complete story would be beneficial for everyone.

Our meeting did take action to support Standing Rock but were not able to use the NY Yearly meeting minute.

Thank you for your interest in my comment.

Sincerely and in gratitude,
Arvia Morris, Salmon Bay Friends, Seattle, Washington

PS. This email is from me as an individual not the meeting as a whole.

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Will you join us?

APRIL 20 - 23
QEW Steering Committee Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

APRIL 29
People's Climate Mobilization
Washington, DC

"...on Saturday, April 29th, we will come together for one massive march to bring our demands to the streets of Washington, D.C. We will march for our families. We will march for our air, our water, and our land. We will march for clean energy jobs and climate justice. We will march for our communities and the people we love. And we will be louder and stronger than ever before." www.peoplesclimate.org

PEOPLE'S CLIMATE MOVEMENT

Continued from page 1

In February of 2016, 85% of old-growth forest in the Great Bear Rainforest was declared off limits to industrial logging. Logging in the remaining 15% is subject to the most stringent logging standards in North America.

Without the demonstrations and blockades of 1993 and the worldwide attention they gained, the boycotts of large companies marketing old-growth rainforest timber, the work of environmental organizations such as Greenpeace, and strong leadership from First Nations, industrial logging would still be “king” in the world’s largest temperate rainforest.

Yes, it did take more than 20 years of keeping faith: years of resistance and sacrifice. It also required painstaking negotiation to achieve what everyone agrees is “a model for the world”—not just preservation of a unique, globally significant ecosystem but recognition, in the words of Dallas Smith, president of the Nanwakolas Council which represents six of the First Nations in the rainforest, that “there are indigenous people who are interwoven into the fabric.” It is that sense of interdependence between the forest and its peoples which ensures the future of ancient landscape.

So, a message from Great Bear is one of hope for Standing Rock, for a possible future of recognition, reconciliation, and renewed interdependence between the land and its indigenous peoples.

But what of QEW? Most of us involved in QEW are not indigenous. My own life has been a long struggle to feel “interwoven.” I lack rootedness in a tribal or “commons” tradition. Like most of us, I lack what Ruth Hopkins, born on Standing Rock Reservation, invokes: “This is something that’s kind of natural to us. When we have ceremonies, we do camps like this. It’s something that we’ve always known how to do, going back to pre-colonial times.”

How could we begin to develop such ceremonial knowledge? Could the golden eagle who landed at Standing Rock on October 30, allowing Natives to approach and even touch it for about an hour—could such a sacred messenger to and from the Great Spirit come to us? Not likely—at least not in that form. But the message from Standing Rock is nonetheless from spirit, and to us.

We can begin by standing still and saying No. Stand in solidarity with Standing Rock, with First Nations of the rainforest, with Chipko treehuggers of the Himalayan hills, with pastoralists of Kenya fighting eviction from the forest commons. Stand with them, moreover, by becoming native to our own homeplace, which is sacred. Stand our ground. Protect the place where we belong. Having taken our stand, work to restore what is now degraded and desecrated—restore it to something like the self-sustaining forest, prairie, savanna, river, or seacoast it formerly was—to “something that’s kind of natural,”

with its own integrity. Something that can sustain itself—and us—in the hard times coming upon us.

Support the indigenous peoples themselves by providing them with the means—legal, financial, material—to do likewise for their own homelands. Together, let us seek, with Friends Committee on National Legislation, “an earth restored.” We can’t all literally stand with Standing Rock. We can, with last September’s American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) delegation to Standing Rock, “listen, learn, and begin to understand.” We can erect our own Standing Rock—literal or figurative—and make it the center of our own place on earth, protected and restored.

We can also heed the call from Dave Archambault II, Tribal Chairman of Standing Rock: divest from the banks which finance the desecration; boycott the corporations which provide the materials; join the campaign “to kill the black snake financially.” The Black Snake, of course, is not just one pipeline; it’s a vast web of pipelines ensnaring the earth and desecrating the lands of a newly risen continental alliance of First Nations. Nor are they merely pipelines—they’re life support for a snake with many heads.



Young women protect Clayoquot Sound in 1993. Photo: Friends of Clayoquot Sound

Ultimately, it’s a matter of bringing home the “Findings” of the AFSC delegation to Standing Rock and making them our own. For me, the first two are especially significant:

1. This is different—first and foremost this is prayer. The whole of what is happening is a Ceremony.
2. There is centrality of healing in the purpose: healing the land, the water and the air—but especially important, healing the people (p. 29).

Thus we can heed the call from both within and beyond QEW for a “more radical witness.” Thus we will restore and keep faith with the First Nations who have taken the lead. Who knows? Perhaps the eagle—or some other avatar—will bless us with some affirmation from spirit.

SOURCES: Ron MacIsaac and Anne Champagne, *Clayoquot Mass Trials: Defending the Rainforest*. New Society Publishers, 1994 & American Friends Service Committee, *We Are Our Own Medicine*. November 2016.

Photo: Kathy Barnhart

What is up for QEW in 2017

By Shelley Tanenbaum, QEW General Secretary

QEW PLANS AND PROJECTS are well underway or about to be launched as we face rapidly changing earthcare politics and policies in 2017. We are excited about this upcoming work and at the same time remain committed to responding accordingly to events as they unfold this year. Some of our 2017 projects are:

- Faith-based groups will be joining in coalition with others to produce multiple actions about climate during the first 100 days of the new presidential administration. These will culminate with an **April 29 march in Washington, DC** as well as regional marches/rallies on the same day. QEW along with local Friends' Meetings in the DC area will be part of the organizing team and will help coordinate Friends' participation in the April 29 mobilization.
- How can we talk about climate change with Friends and non-Friends who are either deniers or in denial?** Our publications committee is preparing background material for distribution on our website and as trifolds on this critical subject.
- We have received a small grant to update our **Earthcare for Children and Earthcare for Friends curriculum**. These curricula have been in great demand but are now out-of-date (last update was 2010 for Children and 2004 for Friends). The revisions will include current information on climate, environmental justice, population, and other topics, and we will provide downloadable weekly lesson plans from our website.
- As part of the **United Nations "Decade for People of African Descent,"** QEW will co-host a side event during the High Level Policy Forum

in New York this summer on food sovereignty and access to water as climate change accelerates. We are the lead organizer, working with several collaborators.

- A member of our steering committee will be reaching out on our behalf to **students on college campuses** who are working on addressing climate change.
- We will continue to report on the situation at **Standing Rock regarding building the Dakota Access Pipeline**, as well as the many other areas where indigenous people and their allies are working to protect the environment from oil and gas expansion projects. Our general secretary is scheduled to give two talks about the situation in January and she will deliver a plenary address at South Central Yearly Meeting on this topic.

These projects are in addition to the ongoing work of QEW: producing a bi-monthly newsletter (online and in-print) filled with inspiring and informative articles and links, continually adding new information and useful resources to our website, sponsoring a mini-grants program for hands-on earthcare projects, serving as a Quaker voice on earthcare nationally and internationally, and working in coalition with like-minded faith-based and other organizations.

Interested in joining any of these efforts? Contact our General Secretary at shelley@quakerearthcare.org.

Friends are invited to attend QEW'S Steering Committee meetings to learn more and to get to know the committee: April 20-23 in Atlanta, GA and October 19-22 at Pendle Hill, PA. Registration will be posted on our website 2 months prior to the meetings.

Bringing Light to the Dark

by Brad Stocker, Miami Friends Meeting

ONE OF THE MORE POIGNANT things to have affected my earthcare work was 2016's QEW table and display, which had a darker element than in the past as it focused attention on those who have been killed for their involvement in environmental justice. We created a display for bringing light to this very dark side of Earthcare. The display held data and resources and was a small memorial to some of who had been killed. It was not intended to list everyone as those who were there were representative of the others. It was a quiet witness. It came to be thus...

Just prior to the April Gathering, news of the assassination of Berta Cáceres, a Honduran environmental activist, had hit the news. Many of us who have been involved in earthcare and justice work knew that while she was current news, she was not alone. In fact, she was not alone in Honduras where 14 others had been killed for doing much the same work in 2016. It was perhaps the timing or that she'd been given awards for her work that gave rise to the visibility of her murder, which included being mentioned by President Obama. Nevertheless, she was the stimulus for the research that went into the QEW display.

In the United States, we often forget that when we are called to the streets, write a letter of protest, boycott, give up some aspect of our lifestyle, there are those in other parts of the world where a demonstration is life-



Berta Cáceres, a Honduran environmental activist killed in April 2017. Photo: www.bertacaceres.org

threatening, where a protest can cause assassins to enter your home. We in the privileged North, with consumption far in excess of our needs, with our huge draw on earth's resources, with our luxury, and expectation of a good life, too often lose sight of the daily sacrifice life in other contexts requires. We, therefore, forget that the struggle of many in the Global South to move against the forces that would take their rights, land, and resources is far more threatening than what we face here.

So, we thought that a humble bow to the work and sacrifices of those who have lost their lives would be worthwhile. We felt that shining light on that darkness is appropriate. Please take a bit of time to look up some of the names, to look into the research linked here and hold them in the Light.☞

SOURCE: "Deadly Environment." Global Witness. April 14, 2014.

Global Witness' *Deadly Environment* Facts



QEW's "Deadly Environment" presentation Photo: Brad Stocker

Between 2002 and 2013, 908 people in 35 countries are known to have been killed because of their work on environmental and land issues.

Brazil is the most dangerous place to be defending rights to land and the environment, with 448 cases, followed by Honduras (109) and the Philippines (67).

2012 was the bloodiest year yet, with 147 deaths recorded.

Three times as many people were killed in 2012 than 10 years previously, with the rate doubling to an average of two people a week in the past four years.

Only 10 perpetrators are known to have been tried, convicted and punished between 2002 and 2013 – around one per cent of the overall incidence of known killings.

BOOK REVIEW

The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate

By Peter Wohlleben

Reviewed by Tom Small

PETER WOHLLEBEN TELLS THE STORY of a professional forester's awakening from calculations of board feet to realization of a forest as an intelligent, feeling community. Sharing information and resources through what Wohlleben calls the "wood wide web," the forest community cooperates so as to ensure that "each tree can grow into the best tree it can be" (16).

Wohlleben values the trees as his mentors. He sees them as persons: they are "happier" under the right conditions; they breathe "sighs of relief;" they are "social beings" that care for each other.

Through chemical aerosols, through electrical signals, through interwoven roots, and the web of fungal threads interconnecting every root and plant, the forest communicates.

Wohlleben, through personal experience and study of recent scientific research, learns that trees share nutrients and medicines not only with kin and offspring but with needy trees of other species; they "scream" in pain, purify the air, attract beneficial insects, ward off predators, and sustain the climate, habitat, and species diversity essential to the well-being of every organism in the community.

"In the symbiotic community of the forest," Wohlleben observes, "not only trees but also shrubs and grasses—and possibly all plant species—exchange information in this way" (11). If, as Gary Snyder affirms, "intelligence is the information passed through the system," then a forest is a wondrously intelligent organism.

Not only intelligent, but caring. Sick individuals are "supported and nourished until they recover. Next time, perhaps it will be the other way round." It

takes the entire community to create an ideal, sustainable habitat; therefore, every individual is "valuable to the community and worth keeping around as long as possible" (4).

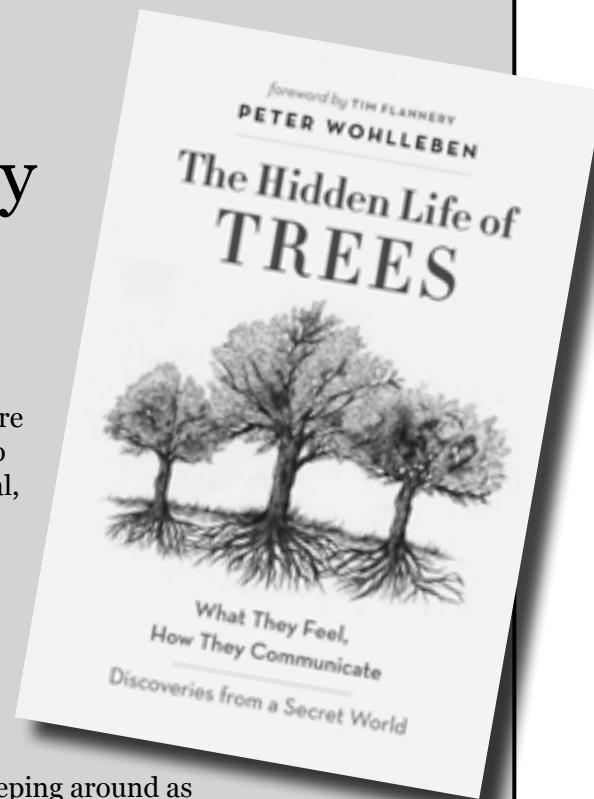
Aged trees are particularly valuable. Not only do they act as "mother" trees in the network, but—contrary to the view of most foresters—they are very productive of new growth and thus sequester carbon at many times the rate of younger trees (98).

As the forest shares, so does Wohlleben, the forester. He invites us to share with him "the joy trees can bring us" (xv). Besides joy and wonderment, though, what did I gain from this book? Greater humility, and

enhanced hope.

Wohlleben himself has gained humility. He realizes, as manager of a forest, that his own wisdom, however transformed, will never match that of the forest. As a plant-community restorationist, I too am humbled. The ecosystem knows best. Leave it alone. It is self-sustaining. Moreover, the old-growth forest is "just as happy to develop from a monoculture" such as an old farmfield or your front lawn (229). It knows how to do it. It just moves slower than we might like. So, to paraphrase the title of a QEW trifold, "slow down to the speed of trees."

As for hope, Wohlleben observes that trees know how to care for themselves and each other



"Perhaps Wohlleben should be the guide for your next walk in a forest."

Continued from page 6

in hard times. Moreover, trees of the same species are "as far apart genetically as different species of animals." Compared to beech trees, human beings are a genetic monoculture. So, since diversity makes for resilience, even if climate change is severe in Wohlleben's forest, "an overwhelming number of the trees would cope." There is, however, a proviso: the "social structure of the forest" must not be disturbed "so that the forest can continue to regulate its own microclimate for itself" (199).

Must we stop using wood altogether? Not likely, is it? So here's some wisdom from Wohlleben the forester:

It is okay to use wood as long as trees are allowed to live in a way that is appropriate to their species. And that means that they should be allowed to fulfill their social needs, to grow in a true forest environment on undisturbed ground, and to pass their knowledge on to the next generation. And at least some of them should be allowed to grow old with dignity and finally die a natural death (243).



Photo: Kathy Barnhart

Wohlleben's scorn for industrial forestry and his love and respect for forests are manifest in his book, which is full of stories, information, and wisdom. Perhaps he should be the guide for your next walk in a forest.

If it's a true forest (not a "plantation"), remember that under every footfall there are about 80 miles of those fungal threads of the "wood wide web." Walk lightly and slowly. Meditate on "the hidden life of the trees." Consider the ancient wisdom of the Kichwa of Sarayaku, Ecuador, who see their forest as "the most exalted expression of life itself" (234). Breathe in the air with all it carries, and be sensitive to the many languages of this interwoven, interdependent, joyful community in which you participate. ☞

Goodbye to Katherine

Katherine Murray has been our publications coordinator for the past four years. She is leaving our employment to move onto another path in her life. She has done an excellent job with *Befriending Creation*, providing Friends and Friends' Meetings a vibrant place for sharing ideas, leadings, reports and poetry about Friends witness for Earthcare. In addition she has expanded our website and created a QEW presence on Facebook and Twitter, including our weekly graphics message. She has improved QEW's range of publications and we will miss her enthusiasm for earthcare.

On behalf of QEW's Steering Committee, staff and volunteers, we offer Katherine many thanks and much appreciation.

Stan Becker, Clerk, and Roy Taylor, Alternate Clerk



Katherine created QEW's weekly social media graphics.

QEW's New Publications Coordinator

My name is Hayley Hathaway and I am QEW's new publications coordinator. Katherine Murray and I have been working together during the transition and I am grateful for her help. Thanks to everyone who has welcomed me into the QEW community.

As I write I am enjoying a light snowfall in the Connecticut house where I grew up. The snow glistening on the pines and covering the ground make the world feel peaceful; snowcapped garden gnomes smile at me through the window. My mother always said that it was in her garden where she felt most connected to God. She helped me get to know the Spirit from an early age and I carry that faith with me as I strive for Right Relationship with Creation.

While I feel most connected with God amid the ravens and the lilies, I have lived a very urban adulthood. For six years I lived in Mexico City, where I worked at Casa de los Amigos, a historic Quaker center for peace and international understanding. I served as the director for three years and coordinated its migration, economic justice, and volunteer programs before that.

Before Mexico, I lived in Washington, D.C. where I worked at Jubilee USA Network, a faith-inspired group



Hayley Hathaway, QEW's new publications coordinator.

*Do You Have
Something
to Share?*



If you write poetry, reflections, or meditations you'd like to share, we'd love to read them.

Send your work to Hayley and we may use your submission in a future issue: hayley@quakerearthcare.org.

of organizations trying to change international economic policies through grassroots advocacy. Here I gained an economics-based perspective, which has shaped the way

I view the world and led me to be active in the global movement of *economia solidaria*, economies in the hands of the people. I graduated from Smith College with a degree in government—it was there where I first got involved in activism, advocating to improve US international HIV/AIDS policies with the Student Global AIDS Campaign.

Now back in the US, I am getting to know my country again. I have spent the last six months with my partner traveling from coast to coast, visiting friends and family, intentional communities, and small sustainable farms with the goal of finding a new home.

Stay tuned to see where we end up!

I am thrilled to be working with Quaker Earthcare Witness. I have known QEW since my time at Casa de los Amigos where we worked together through QEW's Mini-Grant Program to help "green" the Casa with a new composter, a rainwater harvesting system, and a solar water heater.

I have always been drawn to small non-profit and volunteer groups with a lot of heart and spirit. I believe in this good work and want to contribute through my experience in communications, fundraising, and outreach. My plan for my time with QEW will be to strengthen our online and print communications to help grow and deepen our network and impact.

Please be in touch with your ideas and suggestions. I am here to help.

You can reach me at hayley@quakerearthcare.org.



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QEW on social
media?*

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Help us grow our social media community by inviting your friends to "Like" our Facebook page.

A Field Secretary for Earthcare

By Brad Stocker
Miami Friends Meeting

FOUR YEARS AGO, the Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM) Earthcare Committee (EcC) brought forth a Minute on Climate Change that was approved the 14th day of the fourth month, 2014, which reads in part:

We, the Friends of Southeastern Yearly Meeting, bring this minute forward at a time when climate change is undeniable. The realities and impacts have become obvious as levels of CO2 continue to rise past 400 ppm and are causing widespread global disruptions. As Friends from the SEYM region, we personally face catastrophic environmental damage from sea level rise, salt-water intrusion and pollution of our aquifers, rivers, lakes, and springs.

We as a religious community are called to respond now. We recognize we may feel overwhelmed and fear that humankind may not be equal to the task ahead. Many of us have used denial to protect us from what we see is coming. We understand with compassion that this is our attempt to protect ourselves from feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

We need to remind ourselves that hope can be found in our Quaker faith and practices, in the unfailing presence of the Light, in our testimonies that guide us and clarify behaviors asked of us. We value the process of discerning leadings to give us the joy and determination to carry on. We find in our history that many Friends have found the resolve to bring attention and intention to the daunting work they faced, as we can. *(Continued on page 10)*

After the approval, the SEYM clerk appealed to the attending Friends to act to move the minute from one

of good thought, feeling, and spirit into good actions. Before leaving, the EcC gathered and suggested a number of minutes to begin the process for the establishment of the Field Secretary for Earthcare. To everyone's delight, before we rose that day, spirit moved some initial funding into SEYM treasury through donations that were put into a special accounting line of the SEYM coffers.



Beverly Ward and Barbara Letsch just after Beverly's position was approved. This was taken the first day of her job, the first day of tenth month 2016. Photo: www.seym.org

The process was lengthy and arduous, as Friends are wont to do. The documents went through many iterations, reviews, and threshing sessions among Friends within the bioregion of SEYM. Toward the end, the Yearly Meeting approved a set of interlocking minutes for the position, including one for an Anchor Committee to work with the person. The search for additional funding was concurrent to the threshing of the document. Individual and Monthly Meetings contributed to the funding of the

See Field Secretary on page 10

Continued from Field Secretary on page 9

position as they were led. The number of hours SEYM could offer was directly dependent on the amount of money raised to support the position. Once there were sufficient funds to offer at least a part-time job, the search committee initiated the process. After a thorough search, the committee brought forward the name that it would ask the Yearly Meeting to approve.

Beverly Ward thus was accepted into the new position and has been working at warp speed since, and she hit the ground already running. She is now connected with QEW through the UN Working Group and she has made connections with Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). Beverly has been working with regional interfaith organizations and she made her first visit to a Friends Monthly Meeting when she came to Miami.



Florida Flooding. Photo: FEMA

Beverly Ward is a special soul who has a deep understanding of Earth and spirit and she is working very hard to bring the messages of Earthcare to others without and within Friends' world. Beverly's resume is far too extensive to recount here but is available on QEW's website. Suffice it to say she is very well suited for the work to which she has been led.

Beverly spoke to the Miami Friends Meeting about her vision for the FSE position and the connections she has made with other faith and secular groups. She spoke about water issues, Standing Rock, and the Sabal Trail Pipeline as well as other important current issues.

Beverly's joy, enthusiasm, and optimism that radiates from her inner light give us hope in the face of huge obstacles and new challenges. Beverly is a hugger of trees and people, and embraces all of that spiritual leading that carries the heart through rough times. We thanked

her for making Miami Friends Meeting the first of the monthly meetings she will visit and we look forward to working very closely with her on the Great Work.

SEYM has broken new ground with the new position of Field Secretary for Earthcare. The first day of the tenth month of this year finalized the hiring of Beverly Ward for this part-time position. If anyone is interested in more details about the process, please reach out to the Field Secretary who will provide the resources to help: fsearthcare@seymquakers.org.

Friends, the Great Work is before us and we are all called to this ministry. Beverly Ward, the Field Secretary for Earthcare, and Quaker Earthcare Witness are some of the ways that we witness for the care of Earth. Please join us in whatever way you are led. ☞

Southeastern Yearly Meeting Minute on Climate Change

Continued from page 9

We acknowledge, with gratitude, the many individual efforts and changes Friends have already made, and the deep spiritual concern that motivates them. It is time we collectively address local, regional, and global climate issues. We can put our faith, completely, in the guidance of the Light to sustain and direct us.

We commit ourselves as a community to the following:

1. We resolve to see clearly the slow moving emergency of climate disruption, to educate ourselves and to seek to see the work that is ours as individuals and as communities.
2. We commit to seeking the Light to guide us in our efforts, to bringing in the wisdom of our knowledge and the deep wisdom of our hearts to this work.
3. We commit as monthly meetings to discern our particular leadings and undertake them, especially joining locally with other groups who share our commitment.
4. We commit to provide emotional, practical, and spiritual support to those who work to care for the Earth.
5. We will strive to create right relationship with and within the Earth.
6. We commit ourselves to the well being of our children and future generations of all beings whose lives will be so profoundly affected by what we do.

Solar Soars from page 12

are for wind and solar, leave out the biggest externality when they ignore the environmental cost of climate change. Adding a carbon tax or some other means of counting climate costs would put solar and wind at an even bigger advantage compared to fossil fuels. At the same time, adding larger amounts of wind and solar to our energy mix means we have to balance the intermittent nature of these sources. This is doable—whether it involves stored energy (using solar to pump water uphill during the day so it can be released at night, as one example) or an expanded electricity grid or other plans, a new system needs to be developed. But, great news that we are headed in the right direction! ☞

SOURCE: Roberts, David. “2 remarkable facts that illustrate solar power's declining cost.” Vox. December 22, 2016.



The Long Island Solar Farm is a 32-megawatt solar photovoltaic power plant in New York and is the largest of its kind in the eastern US, powering 4500 homes. Photo: Brookhaven National Laboratory



Shelley and Judy Lumb at the Standing Rock encampment, November 2016. Photo: Carol Barta

Standing Rock Update

Shelley Tanenbaum, Carol Barta, and Judy Lumb visited Standing Rock in November, bringing supplies and greetings from QEW.

See Shelley's article on the Friends Journal Blog at www.friendsjournal.org/standing-rock. An updated version of this article will appear in the February issue of the national magazine *Friends Journal*.

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Solar Soars as Costs Plummet

By Shelley Tanenbaum, QEW General Secretary

AMIDST THE 2016 END-OF-YEAR bad news all around, you might have missed this: utility-scale solar is now the least expensive way to install new sources of electricity. Onshore wind is a close second. Currently, solar and wind are at just about the same capital cost for installation, with solar's incredibly rapid cost decrease over the past few years. Past the headlines, the analysis rapidly gets way-wonky, but I'll explain this as best as I can.

There are lots of ways to measure the true cost of an energy source. The headlines have been about capital costs—the money it takes to build a new facility. If you dig a bit deeper to the next level, another way to measure costs is to look at the Levelized Cost of Energy (LCOE). The LCOE is calculated by dividing the total lifetime costs of building and operating the source by the total lifetime energy output of the source. With the LCOE metric, utility solar (\$46-\$56/MWh) and wind (\$32-62/MWh) are less expensive over the course of their lifetime facility use than natural gas (\$48-\$78)—and significantly less expensive than nuclear or coal. Both solar and onshore wind have seen rapid decreases in LCOE: 85% for solar and 66% for wind from 2009-2016.

Digging even deeper, LCOE is a limited metric that ignores things like the environmental cost of different



Solar panels at Standing Rock Reservation. Photo: Shelley Tanenbaum

technologies and the difficulty of getting financing for high capital-cost projects. However, it is a reasonable tool for an overall comparison of the energy sector.

The plummeting capital cost of utility solar makes it an attractive energy source in the developing world, where the demand for electricity outstrips current supplies. In developed countries, the economics change because demand for electricity is stable or dropping. Ignoring environmental costs, maintaining old fossil-fuel and nuclear power plants is cheaper than building new solar facilities in countries with a built-out energy infrastructure. Beyond capital costs and LCOE, we all know that “ignoring environmental costs” is a huge mistake. These technical analyses, as promising as they

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