

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 EARTH CARE WITNESS

Gayle Matson

## Engaging with Ecological Grief

Recently a Friend in my Quaker meeting spoke movingly of her sadness upon visiting a favorite place that had been ravaged by fire last year. Many of us can relate to that shock and dismay of discovering that a landscape or ecosystem we dearly love has recently been devastated by fire, drought, rising sea levels, or an extreme weather event brought on by a warming planet.

Loss of place is not a trivial thing. In its 2017 publication titled *Mental Health and our Changing Climate*, the American Psychological Association wrote that the toll of *solastalgia* (aka climate-grief, eco-grief or ecological mourning) on our mental health is profound, responsible for stress, anxiety, depression, fatalism, helplessness, and resignation. As Friends we are aware that climate change mitigation policies and actions are critical and urgent. But some of us may not be aware that organizations ranging from the Environmental Protection Agency to the United Nations are already emphasizing the importance of climate adaptation, embracing strategies to help us prepare physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually, for the climate breakdown already happening.

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Photo: Gayle Matson's backyard in Chico, CA on the first day of the Camp Fire in 2018.

# BEFRIENDING CREATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER - VOL. 34 #02  
APRIL - MAY - JUNE 2021

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Pacific Yearly Meeting's Unity with Nature Committee, of which I am a member, has recently been looking at ways to help our member meetings and worship groups build climate resilience as we adapt to the reality of a changed future. As part of that exploration, I participated in a virtual seven-week Eco-Grief Circle sponsored by the Creation Care Alliance of North Carolina. I was one of about a dozen participants of diverse ages from around the country, with four group leaders (including a hospice chaplain, two therapists, and an environmental activist) for what was a remarkably well-organized and professionally facilitated support group.

The eco-grief circle gathered weekly on Zoom, beginning with silent worship while participants shared "a grief and a gratitude" in the chat box. One of the leaders read the chat offerings while another lit candles on video to honor the sentiments as they were spoken aloud. Each week a poem was read, much like a prayer offering, carefully chosen to foreshadow the week's theme. The topics were broad and delivered with personal reflections from the leaders. One week we heard about the five gates of grief described by Francis Weller in his book, *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*. Another week one of the leaders reflected on Joanna Macy's *Working through Environmental Despair*. Sometimes guided meditation or movement was used, with video off, to go deeper.

During the second half of our time together we broke into small groups of two or three for sharing on a query related to the week's theme. Like the experience of worship sharing groups at Quaker gatherings, the trust and bonding that occurred in heart-to-heart connections through personal reflection was edifying. We concluded each session by coming back together in the larger group for a closing poem/prayer and blessing.

I did not consider myself to be actively burdened by eco-grief when I began in this circle, unlike some participants, who described lying awake at night unable to sleep, ruminating about impending climate catastrophe and imagining the next extreme weather event. So, I was a little unprepared for how deeply this eco-grief circle affected me, how much I looked forward to it, and how quickly I came to consider it an essential part of my self-care. Joanna Macy and others write that releasing our unaddressed grief and fear about climate change frees up energy we need to deal with the magnitude of the problem, and I experienced that dynamic firsthand. I had not been aware of just how much despair I was carrying about the mess we humans have made of Creation. Keeping that despair at bay required denial and detachment that was eroding my capacity for living mindfully and courageously.

Drought, by Friend Martin Kunz, London Yearly Meeting.



**Pain is the price of consciousness in a threatened and suffering world. It is not only natural; it is an absolutely necessary component of our collective healing.**

**-Joanna Macy, *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World***

The final group session, which focused on the topic of "integration," (which I would rephrase as "living with eco-grief") was where things really came together for me. Francis Weller writes in *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* that the task of a mature person is to "carry grief in one hand and gratitude in the other and be stretched large by them," and I could feel that happening, almost like I was catching wind in my sails.

Our Unity with Nature Committee is still discerning how we might offer such a circle as a ministry for Friends in Pacific Yearly Meeting. The project of encouraging Quakers to turn toward the pain of their eco-grief is not an endeavor to undertake lightly. Still, as Joanna Macy notes in *Coming Back to Life*, "pain is the price of consciousness in a threatened and suffering world. Experiencing the pain is not only natural; it is an absolutely necessary component of our collective healing." Meanwhile, the Creation Care Alliance of North Carolina is developing a leadership workshop for individuals seeking to bring eco-grief circles to their own congregations and communities, and I've already put my name on the list.

Gayle Matson is a member of Chico Friends Meeting in Chico, California and serves on the Pacific Yearly Meeting Unity with Nature Committee.



## Pockets Full of Seeds: Co-Creating the World We Want

In QEW's April online worship sharing session, participants listened to an excerpt from Robin Wall Kimmerer's new introduction to her book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Kimmerer writes about the story that both opens and closes her book. It's the "origin" story of Skywoman falling through a hole in the sky and co-creating, together with the creatures of air, land, and water, a whole new world—Turtle Island:

As a society we stand at the brink, we know we do. Through the hole that opens at our feet, we can look down and see a glittering blue and green planet, as if from the vantage point of space, vibrating with birdsong and toads and tigers. We could close our eyes, keep breathing poison air, witness the extinction of our relatives and continue to measure our worth by how much we take. We could cover our ears to our own knowing, back away from the edge and retreat to the gray decline.

What does it take to abandon what does not work and take the risks of uncertainty? We'll need courage; we'll need each other's hands to hold and faith . . . It would help to sing. The landing might not be soft, but land holds many medicines. Propelled by love, ready to work, we can jump toward the world we want to co-create, with pockets full of seeds. And rhizomes.

We offer you, dear Reader, our queries:

- » **What does it take to abandon what does not work and take the risks of uncertainty?**
- » **Where is Spirit calling you to take a risk? What do you need to abandon?**
- » **Where are you being called to take a risk in the name of co-creating a brighter future?**

Join us monthly for online worship sharing to reflect on queries such as these in a supportive community of Friends across North America. Visit [QuakerEarthcare.org/Upcoming](https://www.QuakerEarthcare.org/Upcoming).

Photo above of sweetgrass by Keith Ewing/FLICKR

### Stay in Touch

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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://www.QuakerEarthcare.org).

Shelley Tanenbaum

## Wildfire Lessons: Our Work This Year

Dear Friends,

Last year's wildfires were different than in years past. In California, forests have evolved to not just live with fire, but to thrive because of it—fires clear brush and release seed for the next generation. Mature trees survive mostly intact. Yet this past year, the fires burned so hot that they overwhelmed the forest's usual mechanisms and caused exceptional damage. Eight months after the Castle Fire in Sequoia National Park, at least one giant sequoia is still smoldering.

These ecosystems evolved over millennia to become resilient to California's natural fires, but the rapid pace of climate change may be too much for our redwood forests to survive. We see similar ecosystem collapse all over the world, as natural systems succumb to accelerating climate change and crashing biodiversity.

Through our publications, our growing online community, our workshops, and our teamwork with partner organizations and networks, we are co-creating a world where all people can live in right relationship with each other; a world where we live in harmony with all of creation. We are here to mutually support our spiritual growth and our activism.

Nature is resilient, but only up to a point. We are pushing her to the brink. This spring, CO<sup>2</sup> was measured at 420 ppm, the highest level ever recorded for CO<sup>2</sup>, higher than what the Earth has seen in millions of years. Methane, an even stronger greenhouse gas, spiked in 2020, despite a global economic slowdown due to the pandemic.

We are sorely in need of a different way to live on this planet, and a different way to relate to each other. Spiritually we are called to do this work. Ecologically, we have no other choice, if we are to survive with a healthy ecosystem that equitably supports all beings.

As an organization, Quaker Earthcare Witness faced a major challenge over the past year. We had previously thrived by connecting in-person with visits to monthly and yearly meetings and other Quaker-led gatherings. During the pandemic, we had to adapt, and are now thriving in the online format. We have significantly expanded our outreach to Friends and beyond.

- » We have offered dozens of workshops for monthly and yearly meetings through our QEW Presents speakers series,
- » We are hosting monthly online worship-sharing in collaboration with Friends General Conference,
- » As staff we have joined coalitions to add our voice to the work on environmental justice.

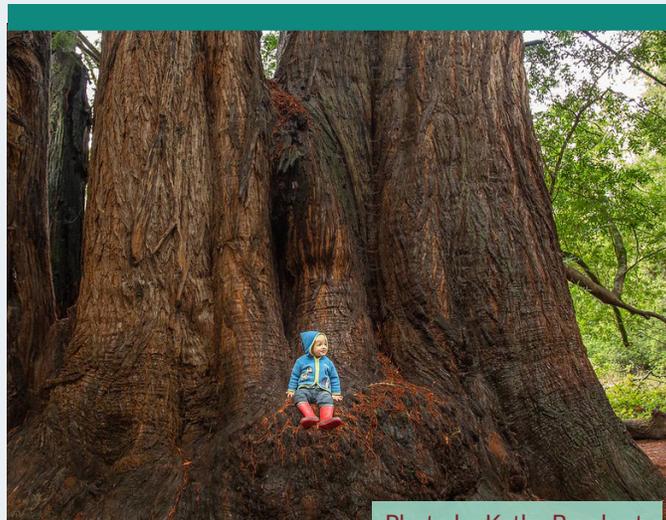


Photo by Kathy Barnhart.

We set a priority over this past year to consider racial and environmental justice with all of our actions in the world. Many of the articles you have read here showcase environmental justice concerns, and have included both authors and activists who are Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC). Several sessions of our online worship-sharing included queries that address racial and environmental justice. Much of our coalition-building has included these concerns and were BIPOC-led. This work is ongoing.

We are co-creating a world where all people can live in right relationship with each other; a world where we live in harmony with all of creation. We are here to mutually support our spiritual growth and our activism.

Please consider making a mid-year donation and becoming a monthly donor—you are part of the change that we all want to see.

Thank you,

*Shelley Tanenbaum*  
Shelley Tanenbaum,  
General Secretary

Donate by sending a check to  
Quaker Earthcare Witness,  
P.O. Box 6787, Albany, CA 94706  
or at [QuakerEarthcare.org/Donate](https://QuakerEarthcare.org/Donate)

Bob Bruninga

## Peak Oil Has Come and Gone!

For decades, peak oil has been a term used to describe the anticipated dwindling supply of oil with anticipated skyrocketing prices due to scarcity and competition for resources. It turns out that the opposite has occurred as the demand for this obsolete, inefficient commodity has waned as solar, wind, and new electric vehicles (EVs) are now better, faster, cleaner, quieter, safer, and are cheaper to buy (with incentives), cheaper to operate (about half as much), and cheaper to maintain (about 10% less) compared to gasoline and dirty diesel.

With the demise of coal by 30% over the last several years and continued North American purchase of large wasteful gas-powered vehicles, burning gasoline is now the number one source of carbon emissions in the US. In Canada, cars and trucks account for 20% of greenhouse gas emissions. Peak gasoline car sales occurred in the fall of 2018 and have declined ever since. Production of EVs is now growing at 10 to 30% per year with no sign of ever turning back.

The switch to electric is happening—and electric vehicles are not to be feared. More than half of the 62 electric cars now on the market in the US are plug-in-hybrids that give you plenty of daily electric mileage plus a gas engine to completely eliminate any range anxiety. Several electric pickup trucks hit the market this year and the #1 selling SUV (Toyota RAV4) is now being offered as a plug-in hybrid. The majority of their local mileage will be electric after an overnight charge, but any additional mileage needed is seamlessly met with the backup engine.

But, the \$12,000,000,000-per-day fossil fuel and gas car industry is not going to just roll over and die. They are going to do what any industry will do: change to chase maximum profits with little regard for protecting the environment or our best interests. Already we are seeing advertising campaigns on how much Chevron, BP, and Shell are doing to move to a “clean energy economy” through their investments

in “clean oil,” carbon capture, bio-fuels, and liquefied natural gas. Do not be fooled! All of their efforts are directed towards maintaining their monopoly and dominance on a centralized transportation fuel system still based on burning carbon inefficiently delivered to your neighborhood fuel station.

There is another way. Just 12 solar panels over any parking space can provide all the energy an electric vehicle needs every day, forever. The national average mileage in the US is under 40 miles a day. And there are at least five parking spaces for every car in the United States. All this energy could be collected and used more or less right where it is produced. No need to then transport the energy through big-oil distribution systems at great cost and inefficiency—the grid already exists. And if you have a sunny roof, you can even own your own transportation energy system for life.



Starting in 2012, the author guided Annapolis Friends Meeting through going solar, switching to a heat pump from propane and added an EV charging station in the parking lot. Now, nine years later, they are up to four chargers in the parking lot and about 1/5th of meeting now drive EVs.

Friends should have a prepared mind and be ready to consider an electric vehicle on their next vehicle purchase. Friends should also do their research and buy from an experienced dealer. Also, be skeptical of anti-EV articles written by the fossil fuel industry that is doing everything it can to hold back the inevitable migration to EVs over the next few years.

It is a bright, electric future. Be prepared for it!

Bob Bruninga is from Annapolis Friends Meeting (AFM) and wrote the QUIF publication “Energy Choices, opportunities to make wise decisions for a sustainable future”.



Friend John Heimburg tends to the soil using permaculture principles in Umatilla, FL. Read his poem on page 10.

Tom Small & QEW Publications Committee

# Soil: Begin with the Beginning

It begins with the land. And the land begins from the soil. Soil that lives. The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care for it we can have no life.

—Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America*

## Soil: Begin with the Beginning

Living, breathing soil is more than dirt, and more than just earth. She embraces all the elements: space, air, water, earth, and fire. She comprehends multitudes.

Living soil builds, slowly, a complex structure, half air and water, with ample space for movement and breath, the slow fire of life. Within a handful of living soil, there are more living creatures than all the human beings who ever lived. Most of them are invisible to the eye, most of them as mysterious as they were 500 years ago when Leonardo da Vinci remarked that we know more about the heavens above than we do about the soil under our feet. Together, these creatures of the soil form vast, intricate networks of exchange and communication, whereby they sustain themselves, one another, and us. They are our elders, both kin and “significant others.”

How is it, then, that we human beings have come to treat soil and her creatures as little more than “dirt under our feet”? How has it come to be that the soil is dying and soon, within a few decades, will no longer be able to sustain us?

## Soil is on Life Support

As a species, we have failed to recognize and respect soil as a living being, an organic community of living organisms who, together, comprise a wildness that is “the preservation of the world.” Instead, we have treated soil as a “resource,” to be colonized, down-trodden, exploited.

On our farm fields, in our cities, the soil is ill. She’s an invalid, subsisting on ruinously expensive life support systems. So, dependent as we are on the soil, our own health and well-being decline correspondingly. And yet, as the

priest- poet Gerard Manley Hopkins tells us, “there lives the dearest freshness deep down things.” It survives, and we can revive it. It waits, within easy reach, under foot, the moment we venture out of our protective shells.

How shall we then restore health, fullness of being, integrity—to the soil, and to ourselves?

## Steps to Recovery

The first step is to realize that living soil is a self-regulating, self-sustaining system of interdependent organisms. The next step is to understand how best to cooperate and work with nature so that both soil and self may thrive.

Industrial agriculture works against nature, suppressing the native life of the soil, medicating with herbicides and pesticides, and utilizing monstrous machines

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to force more and more production from the victim, who continues to waste away, as if under a curse. “For what,” asks Robert Frost, “is more accursed Than an impoverished soil pale and metallic?” As the soil, so the people who live from her produce: nutritionally “impoverished, pale, metallic.”

Nature, in contrast, provides, and is, her own medicine. She observes, faithfully, what Sir Albert Howard, in his seminal book, *The Soil and Health*, called the “law of return.” As she returns back to the soil organisms as much as they have given, and more, she regenerates herself. And us, her children.

Regenerative agriculture takes that law, that process, as its model. Robert Frost, speaking before the national political party conventions in 1932, summed up the process poetically:

*Build soil. Turn the farm in upon itself  
Until it can contain itself no more,  
But sweating-full, drips wine and  
oil a little.*

In that last line, he suggests that the consequent overflow is full-bodied, transformative, and (a little) sacramental.

“Land redemption is the foundation of community redemption.”  
—Jim Corbett, *Leadings* (1995)

### We Belong to the Land

To regenerate a sense of the sacred requires yet another kind of return: to a mostly lost, forgotten way of relating to the elements—the way of the Lakota and indigenous peoples in all lands, for whom all things are imbued with life and spirit. *Mitakuye*

*oyasin*. All our relations. We are one. We begin from and belong to the land. We begin from the soil of our human ancestors and our non-human elders who gave of themselves to “build soil.”

So how shall we, the present generation—most of us uprooted from the land, no longer indigenous—begin?

“The way we eat represents our most profound engagement with the natural world”  
—Michael Pollan

- » If you farm or grow some portion of your own food, practice regenerative agriculture. Build soil.
- » Buy local food, from farmers who practice organic and regenerative agriculture and from marketers who care where your food comes from—such as food co-ops.
- » Eat in season, to show respect for natural, cyclical processes of germination, growth, ripening, and return.
- » Also show respect and gratitude by not wasting food.
- » Use no pesticides or artificial fertilizers, which suppress soil organisms and disrupt the dynamic balance of soil communities.
- » If you have a yard, replace turf grass with healthy food for your family and for sharing with all your relations: the creatures of soil and air. Remember: insects and the birds who depend on them are in grave danger. And both of them depend on the native plants with whom they evolved.
- » Walk lightly on the earth. Especially, avoid compacting the soil or tilling it, which destroys soil

structure and disrupts the vast networks of fungi which protect and nourish.

- » Lobby your Congressional representatives and local officials for legislation supporting regenerative farming, such as Sen. Cory Booker’s Farm System Reform Act or aspects of the Green New Deal.
- » Live deep in the soil of your spirit until, like a seed, it is time for you to come forth.

Even though most of us may be uprooted, we can still put roots down. Let plants lead the way: Indian corn and native plants, with their deep roots, bring space, air, water, and energy down to the subsoil and up into the light. As above, so below. Let it be so.

“Throughout the land that you hold, you shall provide for the redemption of the land.”  
—Leviticus 25:24

If this has set you to thinking, follow Robert Frost’s advice. Turn it under, whether on your farm, in your back yard, or in your mind. Turn your thought under, “And the thought from that thought,” until your “run-out farm,” your “run-out social mind” or your run-out social yard has reached its very own fullness of being. When it can “contain itself no more” and “drips (a little) wine and oil,” it will provide a true sacrament, a sacred home land, and a healing of the spirit.

Visit [QuakerEarthcare.org](https://www.QuakerEarthcare.org) for resource list and to download this pamphlet to share with your community.

Tom Small, Kalamazoo (MI) Friends Meeting, is a member of the QEW Publications Committee and co-author of *Using Native Plants to Restore Community*.

Muriel Strand

## Rebuilding Infrastructure

Many people believe we must rebuild our infrastructure. Unfortunately, almost everyone believes we must rebuild our *fossil fuel* infrastructure—roads, bridges, dams, ports, rail, pipelines, etc. What we need instead is to rethink our relationship with energy and return to a human-scale infrastructure that puts our real needs first.

Many progressives believe that we can graft our fossil fuel lifestyles onto photovoltaics and windmills and just keep driving. But few in any political party want to admit how cheap fossil fuel energy is, and how much unnecessary energy lurks in our standard of living and our GDP. (Solar panels and windmills are nonrenewable harvesters of renewable energy because they require fossil fuels to manufacture.)

How cheap? A healthy adult can generate about 75 watts, such as on a bicycle generator. Thus it takes about 100 hours to generate the amount of energy available from a gallon of gasoline. Multiplying 100 hours times the minimum wage means that human power is now hundreds of times more expensive than fossil fuels.

Yet not all that long ago humans were able to survive and thrive with such expensive energy. We can do it again. We would be wise to rebuild the traditional local farming and food systems that make that possible.

We need to rebuild in re-localized ways, where everyone feeds their community locally. Urban dwellers can replace lawns and pavement with gardens for food and fiber.



Rural farmers can restructure existing giant plantations back into villages and family-size farms.

Working people can be retrained to support ourselves directly, locally, with traditional trades and skills, as well as with indigenous methods of permaculture and regenerative agriculture.

Regenerative agriculture nurtures the soil and produces a balanced diet grown locally, a better alternative to food trucked hundreds of miles from monoculture farms. Only capitalists and commodity speculators profit from conventional fossil-fuel agriculture, addicted to diesel, genetically modified crops, poisonous pesticides, and chemical fertilizers.

Since fossil fuel energy is physical energy, rebuilding for our real physical needs—clean air and water, healthy food, cooking, comfy shelter, and plenty of sleep and exercise—is the first priority. We can continue to get our metaphysical needs from all our relations while we figure out how to afford ourselves without fossil fuels.

Muriel Strand is a member of Sacramento, (CA) Friends Meeting and is a student of mechanical engineering, economics, and nonviolence. You can read Muriel's before-and-after comparison at [bio-paradigm.blogspot.com](http://bio-paradigm.blogspot.com).

Allen McGrew

## Prairie Prayers

Keen-eyed at dusk,  
the owl o'er the prairie glides  
as though on the wings of prayer,  
and the prayer she prays is  
a prayer for prey.

And the prey?

Furtively, he through the tall  
grass slides

like the rustling wind of the  
breath of God,

and he, too, prays a prayer,

and the prayer he prays

is also a prayer for the prey.

But which pray-er's prayer

will be answered today—

the prayer of the prayer

or the prayer of the prey?

And what of we who walk at dusk,  
with footfalls soft and tones of  
hush,

to see the owl, the prey, the  
setting sun,

and thus to watch our day be  
done?

Have we not, too, a prayer to  
raise?

And may our prayer be grateful  
praise.

Allen McGrew is a QEW Steering Committee Representative for Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, clerk of QEW's Mini-Grant Working Group, worships with Dayton Friends, and is a professor at the University of Dayton.

## Join us at the Friends General Conference Gathering

QEW will be hosting a virtual Earthcare Center at the Friends General Conference virtual Gathering, each afternoon at 4:30 - 6:00 Eastern, June 29 - July 2. Visit [fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering](https://fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering) to register and see schedule details.



## QEW PRESENTS! Invite Us to your Meeting or Church

QEW staff, Steering Committee members, and Friends are offering workshops on a wide range of Earthcare concerns. If you are looking for a way to connect with our work and host an engaging session for your community, visit [QuakerEarthcare.org/QEWpresents](https://QuakerEarthcare.org/QEWpresents) or email [hayley@QuakerEarthcare.org](mailto:hayley@QuakerEarthcare.org).

## Worship with Us

Quaker Earthcare Witness is hosting monthly online worship sharing groups in partnership with Friends General Conference via Zoom every last Wednesday of the month. Visit [QuakerEarthcare.org/upcoming](https://QuakerEarthcare.org/upcoming).



## Youth-Led Quaker Grassroots Projects

QEW offers mini-grants for Quaker projects that benefit the environment and/or promote environmental awareness and education among Friends and the larger spirit-led world. We especially encourage projects that directly address environmental justice and those that involve young people.

We're excited about three new mini-grant recipients:

**New Garden Friends/Guilford College Environmental Justice Internship:** New Garden Friends Meeting was awarded funds to match commitments from New Garden Friends Meeting, Guilford College, and North Carolina Interfaith Power and Light to support an internship for a young person of color focused on environmental justice issues during the spring college semester this year.

**Plymouth Pollinator Garden:** Plymouth Monthly Meeting (Pennsylvania) was awarded funds

to support a pollinator garden adjacent to the meeting house. This garden is also expected to engage youth from their Friends school.

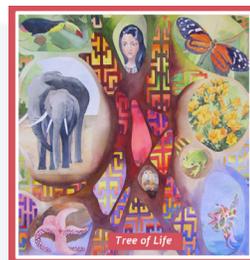
**Princeton Friends School Greenhouse Project:** Princeton Friends has been awarded funds for the purchase of materials to build a greenhouse in order to supplement their existing garden and expand their environmental education curriculum. This program is focused on deepening students' "understanding of the symbiotic relationship between human behavior and natural resources, social justice, climate change, and environmental sustainability."

A greenhouse will enable them to expand this curriculum year-round, and also to expand their social outreach providing fresh produce to Arm-in-Arm, a local food bank.

To apply for a Mini-Grant, visit [QuakerEarthcare.org/Minigrant](https://QuakerEarthcare.org/Minigrant).

## The Depth of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics and Healing

by Mary Conrow Coelho



Longtime QEW member Mary Conrow Coelho recently released a new book, *The Depth of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics and Healing*. In the book, the author describes how individuals and the earth community can be healed by exploring both scientists' recent transformative discoveries and the experiences and insights of the great mystics.

The discoveries of our unfathomably long origin story and the discovery by quantum physicists of the unseen, energetic interiority of the very matter of our bodies and the natural world are explored within the context of the mystical traditions. Important commonalities of insight are offered. These discoveries can be profoundly healing as the author describes based on her personal experience. We can embrace the depth of our belonging within our emerging understanding of ourselves and the natural world. The book includes several paintings by the author.

Order online at [BookShop.org](https://BookShop.org) or on [Amazon](https://Amazon).



Interview with Clarence Edwards, Friends Committee on National Legislation

## Quaker Advocacy on Sustainable Energy & Environment

Clarence Edwards leads Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)'s work on sustainable energy and environmental policy as Legislative Director. He brings to FCNL extensive experience in government relations, issue advocacy, and strategic communications. Clarence joined Quaker Earthcare Witness for our April Steering Committee Meeting. Here Clarence answers questions from QEW's FCNL Working Group, which works to strengthen the connection between the two organizations in order to move forward action on climate change at the federal level.

**Given a new administration and a closely divided Congress, what are the prospects for passing climate change legislation in 2021-2022?**

I think that the prospects for passing climate legislation in the next two years are very good, and I think so because there is a real sense that this is perhaps the best opportunity in years for a national level response to the climate crisis. There is a real sense in Washington, DC, which is strongly felt among those who are focused on climate, that the moment calls for transformational change. The Biden Administration, through its statements, executive orders, and the American Jobs plan, has really contributed to this sense of change and possibility. There is a lot of momentum now, and I think that momentum will carry us to significant climate change legislation in the next couple of years.

**FCNL's climate change lobbying has recently focused on carbon pricing. Will that continue to be a focus? Will FCNL continue to use the criteria developed by your predecessors to evaluate carbon pricing legislation, including an emphasis on environmental justice and no limit on the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to regulate greenhouse gases?**

I think that the prospects for

passing climate legislation in the next two years are very good, and I think so because there is a real sense that this is perhaps the best opportunity in years for a national level response to the climate crisis. There is a real sense in Washington, DC, which is strongly felt among those who are focused on climate, that the moment calls for transformational change. The Biden Administration, through its statements, executive orders, and the American Jobs plan, has really contributed to this sense of change and possibility. There is a lot of momentum now, and I think that momentum will carry us to significant climate change legislation in the next couple of years.

**FCNL's climate change lobbying has recently focused on carbon pricing. Will that continue to be a focus? Will FCNL continue to use the criteria developed by your predecessors to evaluate carbon pricing legislation, including an emphasis on environmental justice and no limit on the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to regulate greenhouse gases?**

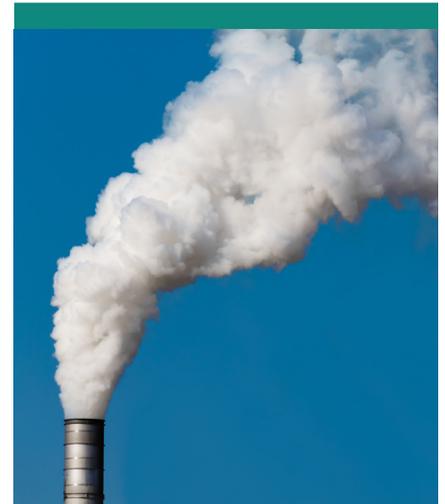
We will continue to advocate for a price on carbon because we continue to see this as a straightforward and logical response to the need to reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere, and we see it as a market mechanism

that will force carbon intensive businesses to seek alternatives. We recently updated our [carbon pricing principles](#) to reiterate our previous position on this issue. We are interested in supporting other climate-focused issues that align with FCNL's vision.

**Is it time to lobby on other solutions, such as renewable energy, no more fossil fuel infrastructure, and regenerative agriculture?**

We are interested in lobbying for other climate-related policies and have started to place emphasis in some new areas. In addition to carbon pricing, we are lobbying in support of the Environmental Justice for All Act. This legislation is important as it seeks to respond to the fact that lower-income communities and communities of color have been disproportionately burdened by environmental degradation stemming from fossil fuel extraction that has left these communities exposed to polluted air, waterways, and land.

The need for environmental justice is the result of decades of environmental racism that has been fueled by decades of residential redlining and urban planning decisions that sacrificed minority neighborhoods and has taken the form of lower-income and minority communities being seen as the home for landfills and fossil fuel infrastructure. This has



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contributed to increased polluted neighborhoods and increased health disparities. We look forward to sharing more about this issue with the broader FCNL community in the coming weeks.

**Are there specific bills you see holding promise in this session of Congress? What do you think about Congresswoman Pingree's bill on Agricultural Resiliency, H.R. 5861, for example?**

I think that agriculture sector goal of net zero emissions by no later than 2040 is something the US should shoot for and can achieve, and I like the idea of seeking to reduce food waste by at least 75 percent.

There are a lot of interesting pieces of legislation and ideas around at the moment. We are

also interested in legislation that supports a "just transition" as we move toward a low-carbon economy. This is interesting to us because we see helping former fossil fuel workers and fossil fuel dependent communities to find their place in a sustainable, low-carbon economy as essential not only to the health of the environment and the economy, but also as critical to social cohesion and to helping people to imagine a better future.

In advocating for carbon pricing, environmental justice, and a just transition, we are drawing a vision of the world that we (as the Quaker community) want to see. For me, that world is one that features a low-carbon economy that emphasizes environmental protection and offers hope and opportunity for everyone.

**How can FCNL and QEW work together to mobilize Quaker constituents to lobby Congress?**

I am eager to engage the Quaker community's grassroots advocates who are critical to our work and success. I am looking forward to collaborating further with QEW on meetings with congressional offices, future web discussions, and (hopefully) some in person visits in 2021.

This is an exciting and transformational time in history. We are grateful to work on these issues and bring a message of hope for the future to efforts to address the climate crisis!

Visit [FCNL.org/climate](https://www.fcnl.org/climate) for more.

Visiting with FCNL's Clarence Edwards and Mariah Shriner at QEW's April Steering Committee Meeting.



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