

A Brief History of Pacific Friends Outreach Society

The Pacific Yearly Meeting approved a Minute, at its annual session in 1996, which gave rise to the establishment of Pacific Friends Outreach Society (PFOS):

YM 96-13: Pacific Yearly Meeting approves the formation of a non-profit California corporation to further the work of establishing a permanent site for its annual session and for other uses. Pacific Yearly Meeting also requests its Nominating Committee to bring forward names of nine (9) Friends willing to serve on the initial board of directors.”

Following the approval of this Minute a committee was appointed to pursue that effort. Incorporation of PFOS was endorsed by the Secretary of State as of February 14, 1997. The PYM committee became the board of directors of PFOS.

Quaker Oaks Farm. In late 1997, after frustrating attempts by PFOS to locate an affordable site, Bill and Beth Lovett, Quakers from birth, offered their 23 acre farm adjacent to the Visalia Friends Meeting for purposes of establishing a permanent site. The board minuted its acceptance of the Lovetts’ offer on April 25, 1998. This gift was contingent upon Tulare County granting a special use permit that would allow the establishment of a conference center on this agriculturally zoned property.

In the years that followed the board undertook planning for the development of the project. During the course of planning for Quaker Oaks Farm, a generous Friend donated \$500,000 to PFOS to further its work of developing a place on the west coast for Friends to meet. Her request was that PFOS make sure that something be named for Bob Vogel, whom she admired for his work with Quaker youth.

Among other activities, PFOS hired a project manager and contracted with various professionals for site and business planning and for compiling various required studies. A special use permit application was drafted and revised. Board members experienced in many areas including construction, law, finance and banking, accounting, elementary and college education, biological sciences, community and program development, and social and peace issues, met each month in Visalia to plan the future of Quaker Oaks Farm, donating time and expertise to the project, until approval was finally rejected by the county. Members of the board attended the PYM annual sessions during those years and reported on its progress.

Post-Quaker Oaks Farm. While a separate non profit was formed which is presently working to make Quaker Oaks Farm a place for young Friends to meet and pursue activities, the PFOS board pursued several alternatives, including bidding on a camp in the Sequoia Monument area, and the investigation of a joint effort with another non profit organization owning over 100 acres of mountain property near Shaver Lake in Fresno County. After these efforts did not bear fruit, the board reduced its size and frequency of meeting. Since that time, board members have been unsuccessful in their attempts to find other Friends in PYM interested in its mission, and, hence, the board’s recent decision, after much worship and discussion, to approve the laying down of the corporation and the following minute:

13-3. The board minutes its decision to offer the assets of PFOS, that remain after expenses are paid, to Pacific Yearly Meeting as an endowment to be known as “The Bob Vogel Endowment.” The income from the fund is to be used as determined by the Pacific Yearly Meeting Committee, Youth Program Coordinator Supervisory Committee (the “YPCSC”), or a successor committee, with the exception that it cannot be used for salary or wages.