

## **2013 Report to Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Session Unity With Nature Committee**

Unity With Nature Committee's annual retreat was in January 2013. We were very fortunate to be invited back to Susan Swanstrom's delightful Russian River retreat house. We enjoyed happy fellowship, thoughtful conversations, and forest hiking.

UWN received reports back from recipients of mini-grants. Casa de los Amigos in Mexico City installed a water-conserving urinal. Central Cost Meeting organized a community service day and built a shed for the Tenbrook community garden. Redding Meeting gifted several trees and seeds to the Sequoia School Community Garden. Longer summaries are attached.

UWN co-sponsored the First Annual Quaker Oaks Spring Youth Work Camp, which combined service with learning about farming and sustainability. Quaker Oaks farm is just east of Visalia on the road to Sequoia National Park, and just southwest of a nature preserve. This Friend learned that the San Joaquin valley used to be a paradise before they rearranged the water.

Quaker Oaks farm is a hospitable place—home to Visalia meeting, the Unitarians, local Wukchumni tribal events, several families, and various gardens and orchards. Campers were honored with (and accepted) an invitation to join members of the local Wukchumni tribe in their sacred sweat lodge ceremony.

We invited applications for 2013 mini-grants, and have decided to award grants to all three applicants, Sierra Friends Center, Redding Friends Meeting, and Casa de los Amigos.

UWN seeks Friends, particularly young Friends, thoughts and ideas about how we can best minister to Friends in Pacific Yearly Meeting on the concern of Earthcare. An uncertain future of climate change approaches day by day, and right action is sometimes unclear, at other times daunting.

Friends' traditional advocacy for peace and social sustainability must be integrated with ecological sustainability. A healthy world is required for healthy people. But as ecological sustainability dwindles, social sustainability inevitably will too. A planet that is being daily and widely abused simply loses carrying capacity.

The ecological emergency we face is a very slow emergency, and many other important concerns are more immediate. Embedded, trapped, in our fossil-fuel addiction, do-able changes seem marginal but abstention seems radical and practically impossible.

But we know humanity doesn't need fossil fuels to survive. And we know that fossil fuels continue to reduce carrying capacity. We are called to work together to thoughtfully choose new ways—and traditional ways—of meeting our needs: clean air and water, healthy food, comfy shelter, and plenty of sleep and exercise. Success will require radical change.

## **Reports of PYM UWN Earthcare 2012 Mini-grant Outcomes**

### **Casa de los Amigos, Mexico City**

Casa de los Amigos' Environmental Concerns Committee received a mini-grant to help purchase a flash boiler to heat water for a women's dormitory and two bathrooms. However, shortly after their grant was awarded, a Meeting attender donated a smaller flash boiler. Thus, the folks at Casa de los Amigos decided to get a waterless urinal instead. Basically, the urine drains by gravity without requiring flushing, although only the simplest models don't also have a trap to contain odors. The liquid (and often proprietary) oil and water in the trap apparently require flushing and replacement every several months.

Casa de los Amigos' water use is an ongoing concern, and Friends there continue to seek even more water conservation.

### **Central Coast Meeting, San Luis Obispo**

Central Coast Meeting received a mini-grant to build a shed for the Tenbrook Community Garden. Construction of the shed and also some transplanting were accomplished on a sunny Sunday as part of a work party that included local residents and the urban gardening organizations One Cool Earth and the Cal Poly Permaculture Club. The work was preceded by worship at a nearby park and followed by a potluck feast for all.

Central Coast Friends hope to build long-term relationships with Tenbrook gardeners.

### **Redding Meeting**

The Redding Meeting received a mini-grant to buy a lemon, lime, and kiwi plants, as well as many seeds, all the Meeting's ongoing support of the Sequoia School Community Garden that was started by attender Millie Milhous who taught at the school for many years. Teachers report that they use the garden to help teach a wide variety of subjects.