

Unity With Nature Committee

Catya de Neergaard, Clerk

Dear Friends of Pacific Yearly Meeting,

Unity with Nature Committee's function is to encourage, support, share, and bring forward Pacific Yearly Meeting [PYM] Friends' concerns, witness, and leadings for Earthcare. Central to our concerns for the last many years is to slow and eventually stop global warming and its horrific proliferation of dire consequences for both humans and the whole ecosystem. Transitioning to sustainable living systems, net zero energy use, keeping fossil fuels in the ground, permaculture, acting locally, and a carbon free future are among the solutions that many Friends envision.

It has been a hopeful year of some progress. Several Friends from Quaker Earthcare Witness [QEW] and Quaker United Nations Offices [QUNO] both in New York City and Europe, including PYM member, Strawberry Creek MM member, and Quaker Earthcare Witness [QEW] General Secretary Shelley Tanenbaum, attended the Paris Climate Summit in December 2015.

Shelley will be here with us at Walker Creek. As one wit, George Monbiot, described the Paris COP 21 Climate Summit agreement, a historic first for the world's nations to unite to slow and hopefully eventually stop climate change, *“By comparison to what it could have been, it's a miracle. By comparison to what it should have been, it's a disaster... The talks in Paris are the best there have ever been. And that is a terrible indictment.”* According to the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (www.c2es.org), if the Nationally Determined Contributions [NDC] submitted so far by 188 countries were fully implemented; it would result in a warming of 2.7 degrees Celsius. The Climate Summit's reaffirmation of the commitment to keep global warming to 2 degrees Celsius over 1850 levels should keep 80% of the world's fossil fuel reserves in the ground where they belong. (See 350.org's website for details.) Many environmentalists feel that we really need to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The big surprise at the Climate Summit is that it agreed to the goal in principle of 1.5 degrees. We are already almost a full degree Celsius over 1850 levels. To meet even the moderate goal of holding to 2 degrees Celsius of warming means we need to take strong steps forward now.

We hope Friends in Pacific Yearly meeting can discern together what is needed and support each others' leadings and actions to live our Earthcare testimony and save the Earth from turning to toast.

In the 2015-2016 cycle, Unity with Nature committee [UwN] is down to only four active or semi-active members, which limits how much we can do. But all of our members are passionately engaged in caring for the Earth and working to stop climate change. We would welcome new members who want to help with our goals and tasks or who bring to UwN their own Earthcare and Sustainability-related leading or project for support and nurturance. We would especially welcome new members from Southern California Quarterly.

In previous years, we have had a weekend retreat to plan our year's activities. This year we met and communicated in phone conference calls and emails. This worked well because we already knew one another.

We have continued with our usual activities of sponsoring interest groups at College Park Quarterly and PYM's annual session, appointing and supporting the Quaker Earthcare Witness representatives, and bringing information to PYM such as the 2015 QEW suggestions embedded in its epistle, "*The Three Challenges*," and the FWCC Pisac 2016 Sustainability Minute, similarly urging concrete actions.

Sponsored Interest Groups at Walker Creek 2016

- This year at Walker Creek we are sponsoring the interest group [IG], "*Environmental Justice: What are we called to do?*" led by Shelley Tanenbaum and Carl Magruder on Wednesday at 8 AM.
- We, along with QEW Representatives [Reps] are supporting Peace and Social Order Committee's IG exploring the FWCC Pisac 2016 Sustainability Minute on Saturday immediately after dinner.
- Instead of another IG, on Saturday at 8:30 PM we are offering an affinity group for Meetings and individuals to share what they are doing to reduce

dependence on fossil fuels as per our last annual session's minute, "*We hold a deep concern for over-reliance and investment in fossil fuels. We ask monthly meetings and individuals to engage in discernment on how to reduce their dependence and investment in fossil fuels. Meetings and individuals are asked to share their efforts with the greater community.*" (Minute 2015-5). Sharings may also include actions and experience about reducing carbon footprints, divestment strategies, and earthcare in general. If there is interest, the **Reducing Dependence on Fossil Fuels Affinity Group** could continue on another evening.

- Instead of the experiential walk, fully opening the senses, and Worship in Unity with Nature IG, this year during the day, we are supporting the outdoor worship in nature before breakfast. We hope you can join us.

Taking Two Concrete Steps

UwN is considering the FWCC Pisac 2016 Sustainability Minute.

UwN supports the ‘ask’ of the Pisac 2016 Minute which is the idea of PYM, monthly meetings, and individuals making two concrete actions to stop climate warming in the coming year. The minute uses the term ‘sustainability’.

For PYM, we thought of:

1- Support a traveling Earthcare Friend position to go around to MM's and WG's to educate about the how-tos for sustainability. This could include bringing workshops on native plantings, edible planting, solar power, water catchment systems, the green Meeting House, and working locally at the county level to promote sustainability and a carbon free future.

2- Focus on how to reduce the carbon footprint to and from PYM's AS, Rep Com, and other in-person meetings. Possible programs (some of which M&O is already working on) are:

- a- Have Friends pick up Friends from the train (ie at Emeryville or Richmond) to and from Walker Creek.
- b - Promote no or low carbon travel options. Bikes (which most can't do to Walker Creek), Trains, then

Carpooling, in that order have a much lower carbon footprint than flying.

c- Consider renting a shuttle van to bring So-Cal Friends to Walker Creek

d- Asking Friends buying motor vehicles to buy vehicles which get at least 40, preferably 50 MPG on the highway.

Appointments

We appoint the PYM representatives to Quaker Earthcare Witness [QEW], the continent wide organization to bring forward Friends' concerns for the earth and for climate change. This year we re-established alternate year appointments as per suggestion from Nominating Committee.

This year's appointments are:

2 representatives serving 2-year terms, appointed by Unity with Nature Committee.

2017 Rick Herbert, Strawberry Creek (2014)

2018 Catya de Neergaard, Berkeley (2014)

2018 Meagan Fischer, Chico (2016)

Note: UwN's plan is that the 3 Reps will share (take turns) with the full funding currently provided for 2 Reps for the 2 QEW steering committees yearly. UwN will help the unfunded Rep find alternate funding sources. This plan meets with the approval of QEW's general secretary. UwN trusts that PYM is OK with this plan.

Muriel Strand, Sacramento MM, is UwN's appointee to the Earthlight Board.

Fundraising, Mini Grants, and other Nuts and Bolts

- We deeply appreciate your participation in the carbon-offset education and fundraising project in this year's and last year's PYM registration. Another education and fundraising project from last year that we hope to repeat is the dime-a-gallon project. Thank you all – Meetings and individuals - who contributed to UwN's special projects fund. Among other things, the UwN special projects fund supports the UwN Mini-Grant program. It could also be for young Friends (under 30) scholarships to environmental actions or conferences.

- We hope you can visit UwN and QEW's table in Maple for free tri-folds and other offerings and projects.
- We are planning to bring out the new round of mini-grant applications in the near future.
- After we re-wrote our charter and goals (Proposed Unity with Nature Charter, October 2014) using the 2005 Charter from PYM as a template, Presiding Clerk Diego Navarro suggested we send it to Nominating Committee for review and possible approval. This we have done and look forward to Nominating Committee's feedback.
- Having a PYM-maintained list of monthly meeting and worship group email addresses available online or by email, would be a big help for committees to communicate with monthly meetings and worship groups.

- Please see our March 2016 report to Representatives Committee for more information on our activities this year.

Gratefully submitted,

Catya de Neergaard
Clerk, Unity with Nature Committee