

Pacific Yearly Meeting  
Unity with Nature Committee  
Report to Representative Committee 2021

The Unity with Nature Committee (UwN) recognizes the need for bold and decisive action and inward transformation among Friends in response to the accelerating Holocene Extinction at the beginnings of the new millennium. The committee is setting up interest groups and online meetings to address these challenges—in particular, efforts are being made to set up an online Worship Group that will focus on the text of *Braiding Sweetgrass*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer, from a Quaker perspective for ecological and spiritual insight.

Furthermore, the Committee is building:

1. UwN's niche among other Quaker/Non-Quaker environmental organizations (FCLCA, FCNL, QEW, QIFF)
2. Methods of outreach to sense and respond to the work and needs of monthly meetings regarding environmental concerns.
3. Workshops/interest groups for Quarterly and Yearly Gatherings (and Online) on processing grief and finding courage in response to the climate crisis.
4. Endorsement and spreading awareness of the work of environmental organizations including but not limited to the UN Actions for Climate Empowerment (ACE) framework, Climate Literacy and Energy Awareness Network (CLEAN), Interfaith Power and Light, and the Romero Institute for enacting climate policy
5. Encouragement of all Friends to engage with the work of Robin Wall Kimmerer and the recent documentary/book *A Life on Our Planet* by David Attenborough.
6. Playing a role in supporting/facilitating/encouraging Quaker work in nonviolent activism and nonviolent direct action (NVDA) for protection of the living world.

### **Braiding Sweetgrass Worship Group**

The Unity with Nature committee encourages Friends in Pacific Yearly Meeting to engage with the work of Robin Wall Kimmerer, an indigenous Anishinaabekwe ecologist who's recent work *Braiding Sweetgrass* has made waves in environmentalist and religious circles alike. *Braiding Sweetgrass* is "A braid of stories meant to heal our relationship with the world... in service to what matters most."

The Unity with Nature committee hopes that the depth, insight, and meanings that Kimmerer orchestrates throughout the pages of *Braiding Sweetgrass* will move Friends on numerous levels: from nuanced dives into the rich ecology of the microscopic world to a profound reexamination of our history, economics, language, and way of seeing the world. The Braiding Sweetgrass Worship Group will explore these lessons actively through Worship Sharing and other methods of Quaker Process.

### **Networking and Outreach Within/Beyond PYM**

UwN sees one of its core roles as being a resource and guide for the Friends of Pacific Yearly Meeting who feel called or led to make a difference in allegiance with the living world. In particular, we hope to serve and build community with those individuals, meetings, and networks, among PacYM, who feel led to address and be of service to environmental concerns.

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In addition, the Unity with Nature committee also hopes to create alliances with other groups outside the fold of the Yearly Meeting itself such that it can connect inspired friends with work and organizations working tirelessly in service of the living world.

As it gains its feet, the UwN committee hopes to provide some guidance to the Yearly Meeting as it moves to address the climatic and ecological crisis. There is a sense of Unity in UwN's conviction and aim that an inner and outward transformation of the Society of Friends, in proportion to the ecological crisis, is required of our collective body for the integrity of its soul. The UwN Committee hopes to play its small part in seeing this conviction through.

The Committee consists of Joseph Cotham, Nancy Glock-Grueneich, Gayle Matson, Michael Dunn (co-clerk), Keith Runyan (co-clerk), and formerly Andrea Beane (resigned from committee in late fall while moving out of state)