

Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM) Field Secretary for Earthcare (FSE) Report Fall Interim Business Meeting 2018

Overview

Provide focus and coordinate efforts on environmental work in the Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM) region.

This report summarizes efforts to provide focus and coordinate environmental work in the SEYM region and beyond since the 2018 Yearly Meeting Gathering. Also included are activities undertaken with the wider Quaker world; faith-based, local, and other environmental groups; and, individuals.

Communication with the Anchoring Committee

Regular communication with Anchoring Committee members continues. As mentioned below, a number of activities have led to face-to-face meetings, collaborations, and other contacts with committee members. Monthly and Interim Business Meetings, Alternative Violence Project (AVP) workshops, and other activities provided additional opportunities for contact with committee members.

Meeting with Monthly Meetings (MMs), Worship Groups (WGs), and Others

Perform visits to Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups within SEYM to help them discern their leadings in care of the Earth, and to provide information and coordination among Meetings.

As a reminder, the suggested visitation request process: "Meetings can issue invitations to the [SEYM] administrative secretary, FSE, or the Anchor Committee. We will all conference over the invitation and subsequent planning" (Phoebe Andersen, 3 Tenth Month 2016).

Contact Information

- The SEYM Administrative Secretary established an email account: fsEarthcare@seymquaker.org.
- A free conference calling number has been established, 1-712-770-8055. The conference code is 662814.
- Skype: phdant.
- Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/7545638812>.
- appear.in: <https://appear.in/fsearthcare>.
- Telephone number: 813.928.8823.
- Snailmail: 13705 Lazy Oak Drive, Tampa, FL, 33613.4923.

A Google calendar showing requests for visitation and FSE has been created and shared with the Anchoring Committee and the Co-Clerks of the Earthcare Committee. All prior and upcoming visits are shown below. MMs and WGs continue to request visits, particularly in conjunction with retreats and AVP workshops.

St. Petersburg Monthly Meeting, 19 Fifth Month 2018

I facilitated a discussion on “Sea Level Rise in the Time of Climate Change” at the Meetinghouse. After the viewing two short films, “Major Sea Level Rise in Near Future”, a TED talk by Jason Briner, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7sEhuSbQo8>; and “Life in a Sea-Level Hotspot” a newscast of interviews with local Miami residents, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ne41XSZKTuA>, participants spoke of their experiences with flooding and other impacts of climate disruption. One emerging theme is the need for meaningful public participation in regard to how local governments invest funds in mitigating impacts. That is, finding a balance between infrastructure investments, e.g., pumps, rebuilding roadways, etc., and investments in people, e.g., purchasing housing in floodplains, building alternative and affordable housing, etc.

Among the participants was a representative from ReThink Energy Florida (<http://www.rethinkenergyflorida.org/>), Alexis Howard, Political Advocacy Coordinator, Tampa Bay Region. Rethink Energy Florida has received grant funding to hold Sea Level Rise Candidate, Tidal Town forums in various cities around the State of Florida and Alexis has asked for assistance from Friends in getting the word out, etc. A link to their website on Tidal Town Halls (<http://tidaltownhalls.org/2018/07/03/rethink-energy-florida-first-street-foundation-announce-tidal-town-halls/>) has been posted on the SEYM and FSE Facebook pages and shared with others for their newsletters, etc.

Gainesville Monthly Meeting, 20 Fifth Month and 18 Sixth Month

At the request of the Gainesville MM Earthcare Committee, I helped to facilitate a meeting to discern what Earthcare action the Committee or Meeting could take on. One potential project that emerged was a partnership with a local charter school in the historical African-American community of Lincoln Estates. Susan Cary, Tallahassee Meeting and Gainesville Meeting attender, is a volunteer with the school and detailed the plans of some school staff to have a vegetable garden, pollinators garden, compost area, and recycling program. A summary of the meeting was provided to the Committee for presentation to the Monthly Meeting. (A copy of the summary was shared with the Sixth Month 2018 FSE Report and is available by email upon request.) After receiving support for the project from the Monthly Meeting, a meeting with representatives of the charter school was held at the school on 18 Sixth Month. During this meeting, the participants identified ways that Friends could partner with the community with initial steps including providing plants, seeds, and soil to support the gardens. Other actions may include an additional meeting, perhaps before the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. Collaboration with other resource persons within the Monthly Meeting, Yearly Meeting, and beyond, e.g. Grow Permaculture, Crone’s Cradle, etc., also may be among the early actions.

Tampa Monthly Meeting, 24 Sixth Month

At the request of the Meeting, I provided an overview of FSE activities and a led a discussion on how Friends’ testimonies can inform our care for the Earth. During Third Month 2017, I facilitated Adult Firstday School with Tampa Meeting. Since that time,

Friends expressed an interest in learning more about how the position had evolved and the desire to better support the work. As part of the discussion, I provided a PowerPoint presentation including a mindmap to illustrate connections. I will share a copy of the mindmap and other highlights from the discussion on the SEYM website.

Miami Monthly Meeting, Scheduled 29 Ninth Month

The Meeting has requested that Cece Yocum and I provide Bystander Training as part of Friends' Miami Friends Retreat on Sanctuary, Accompaniment, and Witnessing. (See below.)

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting, Scheduled 4 Eleventh Month

I am in the process of planning a visit with the Meeting during Eleventh Month. This may include an informal discussion on the 3rd, with a more structured meeting on the 4th.

Interactions or Collaborations between and among other SEYM committees

These interactions between and among SEYM committees help to facilitate communication and collaboration of our regional concerns with national organizations and to be a Quaker Presence at specific events.

- The Ministry on Racism: During the 2018 SEYM Gathering, I was added to the Ministry of Racism Committee. The committee convened a meeting via Zoom. Much of the discussion was a recap of the experience that Jane Westberg and I had the Pendle Hill Truth and Healing Conference on right relations with Indigenous people. I am very interested in Friends sharing the history of the land where we worship. This may include adult and younger Friends Firstday School, site markers, events, e.g., Indigenous Day, etc. During Eighth Month, I participated in training to become a Toward Right Relationship project (TRR) workshop facilitator (<https://www.boulderfriendsmeeting.org/ipc-right-relationship-2/>). I plan to offer these workshops within the SEYM Region and beyond as part of the climate justice work of Earthcare;
- Earthcare: I continue maintain telephone and email contact with the co-clerks and other committee members and participated in the Committee meeting during this year's annual gathering. This includes continued work with Jack Braden and Brad Stocker, SEYM's representatives to Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW). (More details are provided below.);
- Florida Council of Churches (FCC): The FCC convened the fourth assembly of the Florida Interfaith Climate Actions Network, 29 through 30 Sixth Month. (See below.) FCC will have a second gathering during Eleventh Month this year;
- Peace and Social Concerns: I continue to remain in contact with members of SEYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee. Cecilia Yocum and I provided two sessions on Bystander Training during the 2018 SEYM Yearly Meeting Gathering. About 10 youths and Youth Workers attended one session. Approximately 20 more seasoned Friends attended the second session. In addition to discussions on

verbal attacks, everyday bigotry, and unintentional obliviousness to biases, Friends participated in role-plays and explored ways to be allies to persons being attacked.

- Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO): In addition to working with Warren Hoskins to build links, I also am working with QUNO through QEW and the American Friends Service Committee;
- Right Sharing of World Resources: I continue to share information with Nilufer Wilkins to build links, including QEW United Nations Working Group, particularly the Earthcare Coalition (See below.).
- Youth Committee: I worked with the Youth during the annual gathering to assembly about 60 “pocket guides.” I also plan to apply for a mini-grant from QEW to print more guides and share with other Yearly Meetings through QEW. I continue to share resources and information with individual Meetings, such as *Earthcare for Children*, <https://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/earthcare-children> and *Finding the Light in You*, <https://quakerbooks.org/products/finding-the-light-in-you>.

The Wider Quaker World, Interfaith Groups, Other Environmental Organizations

To communicate and collaborate our regional concerns with national organizations including Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT), Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), and Friends General Conference (FGC). To be a Quaker Presence at specific events, including those arranged by others.

In the wider Quaker World, interfaith groups, and other environmental organizations, I have listed existing memberships, partnerships, or collaborations that have been a part of the outreach effort. These include, but are not limited to:

- Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), Tampa Bay completed basic workshops for Sarasota (23 Ninth and 28 Tenth Months) and Gainesville (18-19 Eleventh Month). We are planning an advanced workshop for Gainesville;
- American Friends Service Committee (AFSC): I have been accepted as an at-large member of the AFSC Corporation and will attend the 2018 Annual Meeting the AFSC Corporation 13-14 Fourth 2018 Month.
- The Bridge of Tampa: I continue to work with the Bridge on various efforts. I am working to facilitate visits for David Helvarg, Executive Director, Blue Front Frontier, <https://bluefront.org/>, in Florida along with Kathy Hersh and others;
- Clark Atlanta University, Department of Political Science: Dr. Kurt Young, Lena Young Green, and I continue to work on social justice issues, particularly in regard to transportation projects;
- The Fellowship of Friends of African Descent (FFAD): I continue to work with FFAD and am working to strengthen linkages with QEW UN Working Group. I participated in informal gatherings of FFAD during the 2018 Friends General Conference Gathering;
- First Unity, Saint Petersburg (FL), is a member of the spiritual community of Unity Worldwide Ministries. I continue to work with members of First Unity through

their work with Florida Interfaith Climate Actions Network, particularly on the 8 Ninth Month Climate, Jobs, and Justice Mobilization, <https://peoplesclimate.org/actions/sept-8/>.

- Florida Interfaith Climate Action Network (FL-iCAN): FCC and the Fourth FL-iCAN Assembly convened the fourth assembly 29 – 30 Sixth Month at the J.B. Callahan Neighborhood Center, 101 North Parramore Avenue, Orlando FL 32801. Photos are available at <https://fl-ican.org/>. On 28 Seventh Month, the Steering Committee held a follow-up meeting to discuss additional actions and the governance of the network. Planning for the fifth assembly, which also will be held at the Callahan Center, is underway. More information is posted at Florida Interfaith Climate Actions Network, <https://fl-ican.org/>;
- Friends Committee on National Legislation, Energy and Environment: I continue to maintain contact with several FCNL staff.
- Friends General Conference: In addition to a presentation in the Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) Center and performing two one-act plays; *Homo Sapiens* by Chantal Bilodeau, Climate Change Action Theatre, and *Bare Spaces* by Angella Emurwon, in collaboration with the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts with John Heimburg, I participated in Photography as a Contemplative Practice workshop. My favorite photos can be viewed [here](#). I also took part in informal discussions at the People of Color Center and assisted in the Quaker Arts Center;
- Friends Peace Teams (FPT): Face-to-face and email contact with members of FPT. Working to link FPT to QEW UN Working Group, see below;
- Friends United Meeting: Additional contact was made during the QEW Steering Committee Meeting at Pendle Hill during 10th Month. Geeta McGahey continues to be a liaison person. With the addition of Bob McGahey to the Outreach Committee, I have additional contact to FUM;
- Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC): I continue to work to link FWCC to QEW UN Working Group;
- The Initiative on Coastal Adaptation and Resilience (ICAR): I with ICAR through the Florida Council of Churches and Jan Booher, board member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Boca Raton (UUFBR);
- Living Mirror Playback Theatre (LMPT), Tampa: I continue to link theater work, particularly Bystander Training, as mentioned above.
- National Academies of Sciences, Transportation Research Board (TRB), Environmental Justice Issues in Transportation and the Women's Issues in Transportation Committees: I am a "friend" of the Women's committee and the research coordinator for the Environmental Justice Committee;
- Organize NOW/F.I.R.E., Climate Justice Committee: I continue to assist the local committee in planning climate justice survey and have built a link with the Orlando office;
- The Pachamama Alliance: I continue to have contact with members through the FL-ICAN network;

- QEW: I continue focus on the International Decade for People of African Descent and co-clerking the Water Circle. A report on the 2018 side event on 11 Seventh Month 2018, Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission in New York is forthcoming. In brief, the side event was attended by more than 60 participants (more than 110 registrants). A video of the Zoom presentations is being edited and will be posted to the Earthcare Coalition YouTube Channel.

I also continue to work with the Outreach Committee. We are in the process of conducting our second survey of Yearly Meeting representatives;

- ReThink Energy Florida: As mentioned above, I have been working with various staff members to spread the word on the tidal town halls. I plan to continue to provide this support during the second round of town halls prior to the Eleventh Month elections.
- Sierra Club, Tampa Bay: I remain in contact via email, snailmail, etc.;
- Sunshine State Interfaith Power and Light: I continue to work with this group through FL-iCAN;
- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship: I continue to work with Jan Booher, board member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Boca Raton (UUFBR) and Unitarian Universalist Justice Florida, <http://www.uujusticefl.org/>, through FL-iCAN; Unitarian Universalist Fellowship;
- University of South Florida, Institute on Black Life (IBL), Advisory Committee and the Patel College of Global Sustainability (PCGS): I continue to work with the University, primarily through these two units, however a student and a professor with the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering have been working with me on the Quaker Earthcare Witness UN Working Group. Dr. Cheryl Rodriguez and I have an article forthcoming in *Transforming Anthropology*, which addresses some of the concerns of People Against D.O.T. Discrimination (P.A.D.D.), Tampa, e.g., potentially adverse impacts of more highway construction;

Social Media

I continue to blog, "fsEarthcare Processing", for the SEYM website. The SEYM Administrative Secretary also has created a webpage, <http://seymquakers.org/faith-in-action/field-secretary-for-earthcare/>. Currently, the page contains the blog, the job description, and other links. I am in contact with the secretary on how best to populate this page, e.g., calendars, social media, etc. I tweet @fsese secretary; FB, <fb.me/FsEarthcare>. These links and others are included the signature of my emails. I also have been sending out shorter pieces to the Monthly Meeting, Worship Groups, FWCC, and others on activities to use in newsletters, tweets, etc.

Qiqochat

Qiqochat, created by the Florida Council of Churches (FCC) as a resource for information sharing, etc., has not been used very much during the last two years. It is still in existence

and there is some discussion regarding making use of its applications to further the work of FCC and FL-iCAN. If this platform is more actively engaged, I will share with Friends.

United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD)

As mentioned earlier, I am co-clerking the Water Circle for the United Nations High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development side event to be convened during Seventh Month 2018. The IDPAD is the focus of the QEW UN Working Group through 2024. (See QEW, <https://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/united-nations-international-decade-people-african-descent> and the Earthcare Coalition site, <https://undecadeforpeopleofafricandescent.wordpress.com/>.)

In preparation for the 2018 side event and in conjunction with visits and retreats, I have been recommending a number of films, most can be found on YouTube or Vimeo:

Water Scarcity:

Running Dry: Call To Action (19:18 mins)

The Coming Global Water Crisis - (Documentary, HD) (6:22 mins)

Oceans/Sea Level Rise:

Ocean Frontiers: The Dawn of a New Era in Ocean Stewardship (1:20:54 mins)

National Geographic - Earth Under Water In Next 20 Years (45:08 mins)

Major Sea Level Rise in Near Future | Jason Briner | TEDxBuffalo (18:53 mins)

Climate Change:

Al Gore: The Case for Optimism on Climate Change (25:08 mins)

Gavin Schmidt, The emergent patterns of climate change (12:04 mins)

Climate change: Oh, it's real, 10 Ted

Talks, https://www.ted.com/playlists/78/climate_change_oh_it_s_real

Florida

Florida Wildlife Corridor Exhibition (56 mins)

The Forgotten Coast: Return to Wild Florida (56 mins)

As mentioned above, we did convene a side event on 11 Seventh Month 2018. A report of the event is being compiled and will be shared in the FSE reports and beyond. Thank you, Friends, for your support, prayers, and love. You made the side event possible!

Summary

Since the 2018 SEYM Gathering, it seems as if life happened at once! I have been so uplifted by the way Way has opened. Thank you.

Beverly Ward