

Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM) Field Secretary for Earthcare (FSE) Report

Sixth Month 2018

Overview

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

This report summarizes activities for late Fifth Month through Sixth Month 2018 and includes planned activities for Seventh Month and beyond. Seventh Month 2017 included a number of activities in and with the wider Quaker world; faith-based, local, and other environmental groups; and, individuals. This year appears to be as rich.

Communication with the Anchoring Committee

Communication with the Anchoring Committee continues to include email contact, face-to-face meetings, and other contacts with committee members. During the Executive Committee Meeting this year, members of the Anchoring Committee provided an evaluation to be provided to the SEYM personnel committee. One area that I would like to work on is better communication with the Monthly Meetings/Worship Groups in the Yearly Meeting. As with contacts with the Anchoring Committee, I hope to accomplish this by being a resource through activities that Friends are engaged in or otherwise providing support. Where travel or time may be limited, I hope to use technology, e.g., Zoom meetings, social media, etc., to communicate and otherwise share.

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

- Email: fsEarthcare@seymquaker.org.
- A free conference calling number has been established, 1-712-770-8055. The conference code is 662814.
- Twitter: @fsearthcare.
- Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/7545638812>.
- Skype: phdant.
- 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, affordable housing, etc.

Among the participants was a representative from Rethinking 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 is attached to this report.) 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.

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: 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 Wisdom Day, etc. This sharing is part of the climate justice work of Earthcare;
- Earthcare: I continue to work with the committee as a member and through 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 plan to provide Bystander Training during Ninth Month in Miami as part of Friends' Miami Friends Retreat on Sanctuary, Accompaniment, and Witnessing.
- Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO): I continue to work 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 plan to apply for the mini-grant from QEW to print more pocket guides and share with other Yearly Meetings through QEW. I continue to share resources and information with individual Meetings.

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), I participated as a facilitator, along with Katie Green, Clearwater Monthly Meeting, and Sean Beal from the Orlando area, in advanced workshop in Gainesville, 15 – 17 Sixth Month 2018. The theme of the

workshop was “The Power of Truth”, the same as the Friends General Conference 2018 Gathering theme. There were 11 participants. Introductions have been made to begin planning a basic AVP workshop in the Orlando area, as requested;

- American Friends Service Committee (AFSC): I participated in a Zoom meeting AFSC’s Third World Coalition and will continue to work to link AFSC work with QEW.
- The Bridge of Tampa: I continue to work with the Bridge through Tampa Monthly Meeting and other affiliations in the bay area, including FCC;
- First Unity, Saint Petersburg (FL): I continue to work with First Unity through the Interfaith Climate Action Network and other activities;
- Florida Interfaith Climate Actions Network (FL-iCAN): the Fourth FL-iCAN Assembly was convened 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 will hold 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;
- Friends Committee on National Legislation, Energy and Environment: I continue to maintain contact with FCNL staff;
- Friends General Conference: Preparing to assist with the 2018 Gathering. This will include a presentation in the 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;
- Friends Peace Teams (FPT): I continue to work with members of FPT, including linking FPT to QEW UN Working Group, see below;
- Friends United Meeting: I continue to work with Geeta and Bob McGahey through the QEW Outreach Committee;
- Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC): I continue to work to link to FWCC through QEW. This includes seeking opportunities to collaborate with Susanna Mattingly, Sustainability Communications Officer;
- 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);
- National Academies of Sciences, Transportation Research Board (TRB), Environmental Justice Issues in Transportation and the Women’s Issues in Transportation Committees: I am working with the EJ Committee to update its research problem statements;
- Organize NOW/F.I.R.E., Climate Justice Committee: I continue to assist the local committee in planning climate justice survey and related issues;
- 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 will be provided next month.
- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship: I continue to work with Jan Booher, board member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Boca Raton (UUFBR) through FL-iCAN;
- 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.

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 share "Field Notes", short pieces on activities, with SEYM Monthly Meetings, Working Groups, the wider Quaker world and others. I am in contact with the secretary on how best to populate this page, e.g., calendars, social media, etc., signature of my emails.

Summary

This summer has the potential to outpace last year. One reason is that the FL-iCAN assembly is being held later in the year than previously. Also, there is the added work of co-clerking the Water Circle for the UN Workign Group. Overall, however, I have had the experience of deepening my understanding of the challenges we are facing and sharing this information to connect others and identify ways to accompany each other. Thank you, Friends!

Beverly Ward