

## A Testimony to Earthcare (2<sup>nd</sup> draft)

Friends experience a deep spiritual connection to the natural world. Our connection arises from and integrates with our Testimonies to Simplicity, Integrity, Community, and Equality and centers on living in Peace as part of the environment.

Friends arrive at this sense of deep connection, as with all things, by many paths. Some Friends find this to arise from a sense of responsibility and stewardship, “that we must take care of the gift on loan to us”. Other Friends express this connection as an understanding that “nature itself is an expression of the Divine”. Some find joy and reverence in the simple experience of the natural world. Others among us study nature and find inspiration in the complexity of interrelatedness, in how each element of nature depends on another. Many of us share in all or most of these paths and we unite in seeking a greater sense of communion with the natural world.

Friends deeply lament the damage already done to the natural world and the continuing process of environmental degradation that is often the result of our search for material gain and individual satiation regardless of cost. Our Testimony to Simplicity expresses itself in this regard in a manner that often unites with the words of George Fox who cautions us to “not waste the creation upon our lusts”. We understand and acknowledge that living in a natural, clean, and safe environment has a far greater value than all the material things that arise from destroying it can ever provide.

Our Testimony to Integrity compels us to live lives that are honest, fair, and just. We find that practices that export the impacts of our excessive consumption to our neighbors in other communities, states, and nations lack this integrity.

Historically, our Testimony to Equality has caused us to object to exploitation with the strength and resilience of Truth. We find the conditions that allow for the exploitation of natural resources and of our human communities to be cut from the same spiritual fabric. We are called to break our silence and refuse to consent when environmental injustice is visited upon those whose voices are consistently ignored. We are led, as Friends have been at other daunting moments in history, to overcome our own despair, to relieve suffering, and to unite with Spirit in ways never before imagined to bring new possibilities to Life.

Daily, we become more aware of the suffering of the planet and its people. We find an increasing demand to do justice, to “let our lives speak” individually and corporately. Living in Blessed Community with each other and the natural world takes more than words, it requires action. We encourage Friends to worship together with deep attention to how they may act to bring forward a sense of peace in our experience of community with each other and in communion with nature.