

## Interfaith Earthkeepers Hybrid Meeting

November 13, 2024

Attendees: Ron H, Mark L, Dennis R, JB Hoover, Katharine H, Tom B, Sue C, Carl B, Betsy H, Theresa O, Jess L, Britni C

Moderator: Dennis      Minutes: Britni

**Check ins and Election Debrief:** Many shared their concerns about the incoming administration in regards to the climate and environment. On a positive note, local Measure 20-362 did not pass.

### Updates and Continuing Issues

**1. Turtle Flats:** The work party on Saturday went well. This was the first event that the group managed and ran on their own without staff from Buford Park/Mt. Pisgah. There was good representation from different communities including some new people. Volunteers picked up litter, and they removed teasel and blackberry. There might be another work party in January. All are welcome regardless of ability. People are needed to watch over cars in the parking lot. Mark would like to see more youth come out to volunteer.

**2. City Council and Sustainability Commission:** There are vacancies on the commission in wards 3 and 5. The City Council is beginning to take action around code in building decarbonization. Fossil Free Eugene has also been active on this issue. Goals for the Sustainability Commission in the upcoming year include looking at backup energy sources for emergency situations as well as climate friendly landscaping.

### **3. Local Organizations:**

- Third Act Eugene: The next meeting is on Wednesday, November 20th at 5:30 p.m. at Da Ra Cafe and Brewing located at 565 Country Club Rd, Eugene. There is an effort to grow the local chapter of [Third Act](#), a project started by Bill McKibben for people of retirement age. The plan is to gather informally at the cafe before the meeting starts, to strengthen relationships, and share recent actions as well as plan future activities. RSVP to Debra if possible: [debraquayle@gmail.com](mailto:debraquayle@gmail.com)
- [350 Eugene](#): Tom and Dennis will reach out to Patty Hine who used to be involved with EarthKeepers.

**4. OCERA ([Oregon Coalition for an Environmental Rights Amendment](#)) and [Protect Lane Watersheds](#):** This may be a model for policies in other areas. The petition has gathered 10,000 of the needed 14,000 signatures. You may print and mail your signatures for the [petition here](#).

**5. Divest Oregon:** Their 2025 legislation is titled the [PAUSE Act](#). It would put a moratorium (official pause) on new PERS private investments in fossil fuel dominant funds.

**6. Beyond Toxics/Trainsong Update:** A Texas company has been planning to build a distribution center on the railroad where various types of fuel products will be unloaded during the night and transported through the Trainsong neighborhood. The City Council did not approve a permit. The neighborhood has historically been taken advantage of; 41 of 43 Eugene businesses that are required to report toxic emissions are in that zipcode. The group agreed that anyone who has the opportunity to testify in opposition on behalf of EKs has the group's permission to do so. Britni is going to reach out to someone with Beyond Toxics to see if we can get someone to speak during our meeting. EKs are encouraged to contact their city councilor to request that they keep this project out of the Trainsong neighborhood.

**7. Interfaith Earth Care Fund for Holiday Gift Giving:** This is an idea for alternative gift giving. There is more information on the [McKenzie River Trust](#) and [Long Tom Watershed Council](#) websites.

**8. Recycling Updates:** Britni has been retaking the [Lane County Master Recycler](#) class. She shared some updates.

Lane County plans to build an [Integrated Material and Energy Recovery Facility](#) (IMERF) in Goshen. One side of the facility will process garbage to divert organic material, including yard debris and food waste. This organic material will be placed in an anaerobic digester to produce renewable natural gas. Currently, about 17% of Short Mountain Landfill is food waste, and another 17% is other organic materials. The other side of the facility will process and sort curbside commingled recyclables. This will reduce the need to transport materials to Portland, thereby reducing emissions. The facility will add 20+ years of life to the landfill.

In 2021, the Oregon Legislature passed SB 582, the [Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act](#), which is set to go into effect in July 2025. The law requires producers that sell items with plastic or paper packaging (including food), writing/print paper, and plastic food service ware to begin paying into the system to support recycling and disposal in Oregon. Producers will pay less if they use recycled material or recyclable packaging, which will incentivize the use of better materials and potentially reusable packaging. There will also be one uniform list of accepted recyclables for all of Oregon. Other components of the law include the requirement that recyclables be sent to responsible end markets, producers may no longer put the chasing arrow on nonrecyclable products, improvements for multifamily collection, and new standards for sorting and paying workers a living wage.

**9. Golden Gardens:** The City has proposed using astroturf on the ball field, which could be detrimental to the ecosystem as the plastic degrades, and it will eventually end up in the landfill. Sue will be at tonight's meeting to speak on behalf of EKs to say no to astroturf and protect the endangered turtle. There is a [survey](#) where you can give feedback on plans for the park.

## **Additional Discussion**

It was suggested that we include a list of congregations that support Interfaith Earthkeepers on the website. The list is on the brochure.

Mark's Ordination is on Sunday, Nov. 17th at 3:00 at FCC and on Zoom.

The EMO Earth Summit will be in March.

Dennis brought up the idea for an Interfaith community Earth Day Event. A film festival was suggested. This idea will be discussed at future meetings.

## **Education Discussion**

Becoming Earth by Ferris Jabar - Chapters 4 and 5

Mark: There is a tremendous amount of life around us that we don't necessarily see. Keystone species are a big part of kelp forests. We can plant sea kelp to create more carbon sinks, which have the potential to draw down 5 billion tons of CO2 every year.

Dennis: The global scale is important. Planet earth is one system and everything is interconnected. Plankton are key players in this as they make the earth habitable. Preservation of kelp forests is crucial.

Tom: There is a spiritual significance to the interconnectedness of life.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 11th at 12:00-1:30pm (online and in person at Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene)**

Moderator: Dennis

Minutes: Britni

Education Session: Read Chapters 6 and 7 of Becoming Earth: How Our Planet Came to Life by Ferris Jaber