

Minutes, Interfaith EarthKeepers Hybrid Meeting November 8, 2023

Attendees: Dennis R, Sue C, Ron H, Britni C, Bob G, Cynthia B, Rouanna, Mark L, Ron C, Betsy H, Carl B

Moderator: Sue C; Minutes: Britni C

Continuing Business

1. Advocacy Updates:

- Fossil Free Eugene: Council took a break during the summer. The Sustainability Commission will review a letter to the UO regarding their steam plant. The UO was looking at four options for their steam plant, which heats much of campus and is the largest emitter of methane gas in Eugene. Options include maintaining the heating system already installed, using electric instead of gas boilers, converting to a hot water distribution system and adding heat recovery chillers, or converting to a hot water distribution system and adding heat recovery chillers as well as electric heat pumps. Fossil Free Eugene supports the fourth option. The UO Thermal Systems Task Force has until March 2024 to decide.
- Divest Oregon: Cherice Bock and others from DO met with treasurer candidate Steiner who has a good climate record. The meeting went well. For the 2024 short legislative session, they will release a simpler bill focused on coal divestment. The treasury recently hired McKinsey, *an oil and gas company*, to consult on the treasury's divestment plan. Please continue to share the [petition](#) to the Treasurer and Oregon Investment Council. They are also encouraging people to write letters to the editor in support of fossil fuel divestment.

2. Turtle Flats cleanup: Saturday, Nov. 11th from 9am to 12pm. They will be clearing land for planting. Please come for the entire time if possible so they can lock the gate once everyone arrives.

3. KEPW Radio Project: Please share with your congregations. The project has received little response; some kids seem to be nervous

about the idea. Suggestion: plan a radio station tour for kids. Local youth ages 10-18 are invited to participate in KEPW's Youth Radio Show project. The show will feature topics of interest about the environment, telling stories and sharing efforts to heal the Earth. KEPW will provide a free 8 week training course beginning on November 30th. Please contact Mark at markl@fceugene.org if interested.

4. Music for Mother Earth: November 11th at 7pm at Unitarian Universalist Church. Some funds will go to McKenzie River Trust.

5. Documentary “Atomic Bamboozle” on small nuclear reactors: Nov. 21st at 6pm Unitarian Universalist Church. Please let your EWEB representative know how you feel about this topic and ask questions. Oregon State law requires that they cannot put in nuclear reactors unless there is a positive guarantee by the US government that the radioactive material can be safely stored.

6. Wind and Alternative Energy: EWEB needs to figure out energy generation during the winter when solar isn't a good option. EWEB is looking into expanded versions of battery storage. The PNW National Laboratory received funding for offshore wind development. There are plans for offshore wind off the coast of Florence, and misinformation is already circulating. On the east coast there have been efforts to block offshore wind. We may want to be proactive in supporting it. Fox News is spreading misinformation about wind energy killing whales. Can we get the word out to our congregations to share correct information and support? Ron will reach out to Mark L in Florence. .

[EWEB public hearings](#) with opportunities for public testimony are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30pm. Future consideration: choose people from EKs to testify against nuclear and in support of wind.

[Wind farm petition](#) - Please share with others:

7. Earth Care Interfaith Fund: Give certificates as holiday gifts.

8. Leadership and Meeting Attendance: Sue will be stepping down from leadership. We need someone else to step up to facilitate meetings. Are there working people who would like to attend meetings? The possibility of having some evening meetings was brought up, but many people have conflicts with evenings.

9. Friends Church Seasonal Reflections on Unity with Nature:

Check out their [weekly posts](#) on various topics.

Education Discussion - Nature's Best Hope by Doug Tallamy - Chapter 3

The book is available as an eAudiobook (free) through Hoopla via Eugene Public Library (search the title on the [library website](#)).

- Mark: Humans are meant to be in connection with each other.
- Cynthia: I enjoyed examples of animals that are better able to move about when habitat areas are connected not fragmented.
- Dennis: He accidentally picked up the young reader's version. "Think globally, act locally" is a good perspective to pitch to younger readers. We create shorter flights for smaller birds when we create dense habitats in our yards. How can we create more effective habitats on our own properties that connect to other properties? The Willamette Greenway is a good example of habitat connection. Undisturbed green lands with restrictions on development.
- Ron: Preserves need to be connected for animals that migrate.
- Sue: Bethel Community Golden Gardens wants to develop the space for soccer fields with parking and a new high school. They have native turtles. Sue is going to write a letter to the City Council about maintaining habitat connectivity. UU has a principal: We believe in the interconnectivity of life. Episcopal Church has a statement on creation care.
- Mark: The majority of land in the US is privately owned. Switching from turf grass to native plants is one way to make a difference, including at our congregations.
- Cynthia: Eugene Friends Church received a \$1200 grant to do trout friendly landscaping with all native plants. This will be an educational project.

Additional Discussion on Solar Energy:

Community solar may also be an option. Agriculture can be done underneath panels for plants that need shade. Eastern Oregon is setting up solar all over. The up front cost is larger, but the long run cost is low. Batteries should become cheaper in the next several years.

Next Meeting: December 13, 2023 (online and in person at First Congregational Church)

Moderator: Ron H

Minutes: Britni C

Education Session: *Nature's Best Hope* - Read through chapter 4