

Minutes, Interfaith EarthKeepers Hybrid Meeting
March 13, 2024

Attendees: Candi D, Ron H, Mark L, Cynthia B, Sue C, Ron R, Carl B, Britni C, Betsy H, Keith O

Moderator: Mark L Minutes: Britni C

Continuing Business

Fossil Free Eugene: University of Oregon, the largest carbon emitter in Eugene, is considering different options for heating and cooling. Northwest Natural rates are expected to increase. Fossil Free Eugene has created a [petition](#) to urge the university to choose the option that would result in the greatest reduction in emissions.

Divest Oregon: The [COAL Act](#) passed in the Oregon Legislature. A celebration and treasurer candidate forum will be held on Tuesday, April 2nd at 6:30pm at the First Unitarian Church of Portland.

Turtle Flats: Work parties are scheduled for March 23rd and April 20th from 9am-12pm. All are welcome, including all ability levels. It is important to arrive at 9:00 because the gate needs to be locked by 9:30. This is a great opportunity to make connections with each other and the land. Youth can receive community service hours. Kids are welcome. Dogs are not allowed. Please share with your congregations. [Register here](#). Contact Mark with any questions at markl@fceeugene.org.

Turtle Flats is located at the confluence of the Coast and Middle Forks of the Willamette River. Restoration work includes returning the site to its original habitat. Wildlife and fish species are returning. The area was hit hard during the January ice storm, and recent work has included storm recovery. The area was purchased by the Nature Conservancy to protect it from development, and it is now managed by Friends of Buford Park. Restoration work at Buford Park has recently included ecological burns.

Immigrant support, Oregon Peace Network: Earth Keepers have received requests for support with immigration issues as well as those related to war and peace. The question, "How do we deal with issues that fall outside the framework of our mission?" was posed. It was recommended that we don't tie Earthkeepers to any certain position, but rather address them as individuals. As individuals we can work with other groups on other issues. The idea that all issues are interrelated was also shared. For example, the damage to the earth through war is massive, and a border wall to curb immigration would greatly affect the ecosystems in those

areas. Other suggestions include dealing with this on a case by case basis and putting forth a statement in support when there is alignment.

New Business

1. Common Ground Documentary: The Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene will host a showing of [Common Ground](#) on Tuesday April 16th at 6:00pm.

2. Recruiting/Moderating: Mark would like to have at least one other person to take turns moderating our monthly meetings.

3. Interfaith Earth Connections Gathering: The event is officially scheduled for May 9th from 7:00-8:30pm at First Congregational Church. This will be a gathering of green, earth care, and climate teams; all faith communities are invited to participate. There will be time for mingling as well as a sharing circle for groups to share what they have been working on. If time allows, there will be opportunities for table conversations. Ice cream bars will be donated by the company that Ron R works for. Cynthia and Ron R will make a flier/poster for the event. Britni will make a [Google form for RSVPs](#). Please share with your congregations and others that you are connected with.

4. Next Meeting Venue: Sue will check in with the UU Church.

5. Environmental Rights Initiative: Keith will go to Salem on May 4th to learn more about the starting of the Environmental Rights Initiative that is being proposed for changing Oregon's Constitution. He will report back.

Education Discussion - Nature's Best Hope by Doug Tallamy - Chapter 7

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

Betsy shared about an NPR program that discussed the importance of allowing nature to replant areas that have burned because the seeds are adapted locally. Also, native plants don't need additional water because they're adapted to the climate.

Cynthia reminded us that birds may eat seeds from ornamental plants, which often don't have the same nutritional value, and they end up planting the seeds in natural areas. Butterfly bushes attract butterflies, but they don't have the nutrition that the butterflies need, which often leads to their death.

Keith discussed the tension between tidiness, which has become mainstream, and the wild look of native plants.

On Tallamy's website are resources to help you find keystone species for your location, one for [trees and shrubs](#), and one for [container gardens](#).

Sue shared that the local Sierra Club chapter is having their annual native plant sales on Thursday 3/14 at 7pm at the Eugene Garden Club, and Saturday 3/16 from 10am-3pm at 1066 Lincoln in the parking lot.

Next Meeting: April 10, 2024 (online and in person at TBD)

Moderator: TBD

Minutes: Britni

Education Session: *Nature's Best Hope* - Read chapter 8