

## Minutes, Interfaith EarthKeepers Hybrid Meeting

June 12, 2024

Attendees: Mark L, Jerry S, Theresa O, Ron C, Ron H, Sue C, Cynthia B, Bob G, Britni C, Dennis R

Moderator: Mark     Minutes: Britni

### **Continuing Business**

**1. Fossil Free Eugene:** They are starting to ramp up testimony with the City Council. The Council is supposed to bring up the issue of gas usage, and they have been having meetings with stakeholders. They would like to hear from the faith community. Sue attended a meeting about resilient homes and energy efficient buildings. Some are looking at putting limits on nitrous oxide as a way to reduce natural gas usage. City sustainability staff have done a couple of webinars. EWEB has low income programs to help people replace furnaces and water heaters. The City Sustainability Commission submitted a building decarbonization report to the council. They have an education and outreach committee, which will be tabling at summer park events and going to neighborhood association meetings this fall. The Commission advises the council on what they hear from citizens. Fossil Free Coalition is hiring a new coalition coordinator.

**2. Divest Oregon:** Testimony at Oregon Investment Council meetings continues. Monthly Divest Oregon meetings are paused for June and July. This will be an important issue with the upcoming treasurer election.

**3. OCERA (Oregon Coalition for an Environmental Rights Amendment):** Rights of Nature and Rivers; Keith had planned to reach out to Melissa Martin about presenting at a future EK meeting. This topic has been tabled until the next meeting, as Keith is not present.

**4. Interfaith Earth Connections Gathering (5/9) Debrief:** The event went well and new connections were made. Mark received emails from a couple of people saying that they plan to attend the next EK meeting. One faith community group has 26 members. There is an openness to collaboration.

Ideas that were brought up are listed below. "Community gardens" was a popular topic. It was suggested that each active EarthKeeper choose and spearhead one idea. We will discuss this more at the next meeting. Dennis chose the topic of sharing about incentives for greening our buildings and individual homes.

### **ACTIONS**

Recycle plastics

Ultimate Frisbee...team traveling  
Congregation collaboration

Bring Youth groups together to LOVE Oregon

Community Gardens  
share tools, work, produce, know-how, space

"Library model" Tool Sharing

Multi faiths active native habitat work projects

Interfaith work projects

Confront military-industrial complex

Challenge investments

Interfaith work projects

## EDUCATION

Share with our faiths our information on actions, work projects, via their newsletters, email, blogs, etc.

Make people aware of our website. [interfaithearthkeepers.org](http://interfaithearthkeepers.org)

Education for our faiths on converting your yard to native species and the same for our faith buildings

Incentives for greening our buildings and individual homes, etc.

Divesting from Citibank, etc.

Draw people from the larger community for discussion of movies and books!

Share "Story of Stuff" video

## ADVOCACY

Bring Indigenous land and food practices back to Oregon for all!

Degrowth Economy

Pressure grocery stores to let us bring our own containers to decrease their use of plastic.

Give matching financial support to support green choices.

When giving public testimony to government agencies, let them know you are a person of faith, and this testimony reflects that.

Earth Day event and services

## PERSONAL

Non auto transport with fellow church members, both to church and elsewhere.

Try to eat only food grown here in the Willamette Valley

**5. Unity of the Valley SOLVE Beach Cleanup:** On June 2nd, eight members spent two hours picking up 15 pounds of garbage, mostly paper and plastic, over a two mile stretch of beach at Carl Washburne State Park. This was their first beach cleanup event, and it was successful. Next time they will put the word out to other churches.

## New Business

**1. Membership Outreach, Tabling at Community Events:** PRIDE on August 10 at Alton Baker Park; FCC, UU, and Fossil Free will be there. Include brochures about EKs, Interfaith Earth Fund, and Turtle Flats at congregational tables.

**2. Calendar Proposal:** Cynthia would like to create a shared Google calendar on the EK website for faith community events around earth care. She will send an email to faith communities to collect events once a month. Ron will work on getting this to work on the website. Cynthia would like to collect contact information for one person from each faith community.

**3. EWEB Letter of Support:** The sign-on letter calls on EWEB to

1. Increase access to high efficiency heat pump technologies via improved and expanded rebate/loan programs, starting with heat pump water heaters;
2. Establish progressive rate design to ensure large commercial energy users are paying their fair share;
3. Replace Bill Assistance Programs with Percentage of Income Payment Plans (PIPPs); and
4. Better engage the community through outreach and education.

It was also suggested to consider how a program could support small businesses. The disproportionate energy burden speaks to faith communities and social justice. The group agreed to sign on EarthKeepers to the letter.

**4. UU Earth Action An Evening with Bill McKibben:** On July 5th at 6pm the event will be live streamed at UU Eugene Church. Bill McKibben is a cofounder of 350 and is extremely knowledgeable about the climate issue. Ron will put a digital poster on the EK website.

#### **Additional Discussion:**

Citizens Climate Lobby meetings are posted on Eugene Parks and Rec activities page.

**Work with Indigenous Communities:** UU has an Indigenous connections group. People have volunteered at events at the longhouses at LCC and UO. There are no financial transactions allowed in the longhouses; it is often seen as an insult. Eugene Friends Meeting website includes information about how to make donations to Native people. Folks from Friends volunteer at Randy Woodley's [Eloheh Farm](#). Randy Woodley is the author of Becoming Rooted, which was our previous book for education discussions. Siuslaw River land back (canoe entry sites and island stewardship) and Willamette Falls dam removal were also mentioned.

#### **Education Discussion - Nature's Best Hope** by Doug Tallamy - Chapter 10

Mark: It used to be thought that we can't do anything in cities because they're covered with concrete. Highline in NYC is an example. Nature is resilient.

[Lane County Audubon Habitat Haven](#) Backyard Certification is a new program that helps people build habitat in their yards using native plants.

Britni: A lot of people would like to do this but need support. Education is important. Providing examples with signs at churches may inspire others. We could also share information at Neighborhood Associations.

Cynthia: We can't just count on parks; we need to provide the habitat in our towns and backyards. Habitat signs in yards can help educate others. Cynthia would like to invite EKs to Friends Church to see their trout friendly landscaping project.

Sue suggested that we pass on our book to someone else when we're done.

#### **National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat**

There are many sources for native plants including native plant sales at Buford Park and through Sierra Club.

[Lawn Be Gone](#) landscaping business in Eugene focuses on native plants and water wise landscaping.

**Share book recommendations at the next meeting.** (This is the last chapter of Nature's Best Hope.)

**Next Meeting: July 10, 2024 at 12:00-1:30pm (online and in person at Unitarian Universalist Church)**

Moderator: Dennis

Minutes: Britni

Education Session: *Nature's Best Hope* - Read chapter 11